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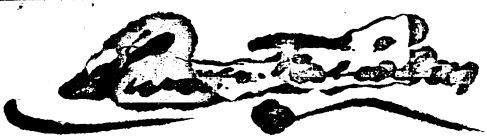

Catholic Anecdotes,

or, the

Catechism in Examples,

FROM THE FRENCH,

BY MRS. J. SADLIER.

NEW YORK:

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CATHOLIC ANECDOTES;

OR, THE

CATECHISM IN EXAMPLES.

THREE VOLUMES COMPLETE IN ONE.

BY THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS,

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY MRS. J. SADLIER.

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CATHOLIC ANECDOTES;

OR,

THE CATECHISM IN EXAMPLES.

CHAPTER I.

IMPORTANCE OF THE CATECHISM.

1. *Esdras reading the Holy Scriptures.*—Catechism, my dear friends, is no ordinary science, and it must not be heard like a profane lesson. The same attention and the same respect must be brought to it which the Jews brought to the reading of the law of God by Esdras, on the return from the Babylonian captivity, 536 years before Christ. That unhappy nation was then reduced to fifty-four thousand individuals, who returned to Judea under the guidance of Zorobabel. The first care of Esdras,—who was one of their most distinguished priests and doctors,—was to remind them of the law of God, which they had unhappily too much forgotten during their long exile. For that purpose, a wooden platform was

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erected on the street leading to the Water Gate, in Jerusalem; Esdras ascended it, and the multitude gathered around with devout eagerness. It was the first day of the seventh month; Esdras had brought with him an old manuscript, in which were contained the books of Moses. When he saw that all were silent and attentive, he opened that venerable book, and began to read slowly, clearly, and distinctly. Scarcely had he pronounced the first words when all present stood up—men and women, the young and the old,—through respect for the Word of God. And so they remained, motionless, from six o'clock in the morning till it was almost noon-day. When Esdras had finished, each withdrew in silence, resolving to be faithful in discharging the precepts of the Lord, so as one day to be partakers of His great reward. And that is just how you, my dear friends, ought to hear the Catechism all the year long; we shall see who will be most faithful to this duty.—II. Esdras, *chap. viii.*

2. *The Disciple of Zeno.*—It is not enough, my dear friends, to assist at the Catechism; it is not even enough to hear and retain it, what is learned must also be put in practice. That reminds me of a story more than two thousand years old. A youth who had been placed at the school of Zeno, a famous Greek philosopher, returned home after some time. "Well!" said his father, "what good hast thou learned of thy philosopher?" "Father, you will soon see," modestly answered the young disciple, without

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adding another word. His father, taking his silence for an acknowledgment of the little progress he had made in his studies, flies into a furious passion, and beats him unmercifully: "Wretch! hast thou, then, lost all thy time? Is this the fruit of all the expense I have been at for thine education?" The poor youth, far from being moved to anger, bore all with patience, and when his father's wrath began to subside—"Well! father," said he, with mildness and submission, "there is what I learned at the school of Zeno; you see I have not lost my time, since I have become better."—FILASSIER, *Dictionnaire d' Education*, II., 333.

3. *How St. Dorothy Studied.*—Do you know how you ought to study your lessons, especially your Catechism? I am going to tell you, my dear children, or rather, I am going to let St. Dorothy tell you, and he was one of the most learned Abbots of the deserts of Palestine, who lived in the fourth century. "When I was in the world," says he, "I had acquired such a taste for study, that I thought of nothing else; I would often have forgotten even to eat, if one of my friends had not taken the trouble of coming in search of me at the hour of meals. My passion for learning went so far, that at table I had always an open book before me, so that I studied and eat at the same time. In the evening, as soon as I returned from class, I hastened to light my lamp, took some refreshment, then shut myself up in my room till near midnight. Then, when I went to bed, I took my book with me,

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hid it under my bolster, and if I chanced to wake during the night, I resumed my book, and read as long as I was able. So it was that I acquired a little learning and some eloquence; alas! if I had only been as ardent to acquire virtue, I should long ago have been a Saint." Such, my dear children, is the history of St. Dorothy; when shall we display as much eagerness in learning our Catechism and other lessons, as he did in the studies of his youth?—RODRIGUEZ, *Practice of Christian Perfection*, I., 109.

4. *The Picture Gained at Catechism.*—Oh! how happy I should be if there were amongst you, my little friends, many children like him whose story I am about to tell you! He was a German. One day, the parish priest was explaining the Catechism in church; this little boy, who was not quite six years old, chanced to be present with the others who were old enough to learn. He was taught to make the sign of the cross, and a picture was given him in order to encourage him. Little Christopher, much rejoiced, hastened to show his picture to every one; but his father, being a Protestant, was not so well pleased as he was; he even threatened to beat him cruelly, if he did not tear the picture to pieces, and promise never to go to Catechism again. The courageous child chose rather to bear his father's harsh treatment than to tear his picture or make such a promise. A week passed without any more being said; but, on the following Sunday, as soon as the bell rang for Catechism, Christopher was hurrying

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away, when the father, perceiving it, caused the door to be locked, and ordered him on no account to go out; but the child never ceased crying and beseeching, till they had to open the door, when he ran immediately to Catechism, and never after missed it. Nor did his father seek any more to prevent him, because he perceived that the sweet child was wiser and more obedient since he went there. Do you in like manner, my young friends, and every one will be pleased with you: the good God, your parents, your pastors, your teachers, and yourselves.—Abbe Noel, *Catechisme de Rodez*, I., 22.

5. *Diderot Teaching the Catechism.*—The Catechism is something so fine and at the same time so necessary, that impious philosophers themselves have had a high idea of it. Amongst others, I can quote the example of Diderot, who was one of the greatest enemies of religion in the last century. He undertook to teach the Catechism himself to his daughter, who was only ten or twelve years old; he obliged her, moreover, to learn every week the Gospel and perhaps the Epistle for the Sunday. One day when he was occupied in making her recite it, in came one of his friends, a philosopher like himself. The new comer, much amazed, began to laugh and make merry over what he saw: "How!" said he to Diderot, "is it possible? you are teaching your daughter the Catechism! You are, then, no longer a philosopher?" "Why certainly," replied Diderot, well convinced of what he said, "I make Marie learn both

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the Catechism and the Gospel. Is there anything better that I could teach her, to make her a good girl, a devoted woman, a kind and affectionate mother?" —Filassier, *Dictionnaire d'Education*, I., 687.

6. *The Martyr of the Catechism.*—Who would believe that there are generous Christians who would rather die than part with their Catechism? Here is a striking instance of the kind, which took place in France, about the year 1792, if I am not mistaken. Jean Chantebel, a farmer, residing in the village of Du Chene, in the diocese of Rennes, knew the principles of his religion; but he loved to read and study them over and over in the small Catechism he had learned in his youth. That book, so precious to faith, was his crime. Evil men, who hated our good farmer because he would not become a rebel, made like them in the time of the Revolution, found it in his house, and that was sufficient to secure his arrest. A committee assembles, and orders the Catechism to be burned. A pyre is erected with much pomp; Chantebel is brought forward, and they read to him the sentence passed on his book and himself. He is to take the torch presented to him, and set fire to the Catechism. "I will never do it," said he with energy; "that book contains the principles of my faith, and you will never get me to renounce it." They threaten him, but he remains inflexible. One of the brigands seizes the flaming torch and applies it to the hand of the generous confessor. "Oh! you may burn not only my hand," said Chantebel, "but my whole body,

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before I will consent to commit an act unworthy of my religion." The brigands, confused and disconcerted, consulted amongst themselves. A new warrant decrees that he shall be conducted ignominiously through the streets of Martigny, mounted on a horse, the tail of which he is to hold in his hand. He shows not the least reluctance: his aspect mild and serene amid the hootings of the populace who escort him on his way, announces the tranquillity that reigns within. Amongst the crowd attracted by the sight, was found Chantebel's own wife. She approaches him, and in words of sublime simplicity cries out—"*Bear it all bravely; it is for the good God, and He will reward you.*" Behold what was endured for the sake of their Catechism by these poor peasants, because they knew that to attack the Catechism is to attack religion itself.—Abbe Reyre, *Christian Anecdotes*, 476.

7. *A Colonel's Small Catechism.*—How happy you are, dear children, to learn the Catechism as you do! There are learned men, doctors, many great persons who do not know as much of it as you do. In this connection, I remember the story of Col. de B——. He was a worthy man, as the phrase goes; but not over well versed in theology. One day he begged permission of the Superior of a religious house to make a short retreat under his direction. Being admitted, the first book placed in his hand was the Small Catechism. "How, father! do you want to put me back to A B C?" "I am far from thinking of such a thing, Colonel! but I fear that you may have forgotten some

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of your Catechism." "Oh! never fear, father! I know my religion; I had learned the Catechism all through before I was ten years old!" "An additional reason, Colonel! for the longer it is since you learned your Catechism, the greater your need to refresh your memory. Take that little book, read it attentively, and you shall speak of it to me this evening." "Why not speak of it now, instead of this evening, father? Question me, and you shall see." Accordingly, the Superior did put some questions to him. It was not hard to puzzle the Colonel; he made even some gross blunders; thus he knew not whether there was in Christ one or two natures; he confounded satisfaction with restitution, &c., &c. At last, he had the good sense and candor to admit that he had been in the wrong; he took the Catechism, went over it carefully, and made an excellent retreat.—LASSAUSSE, *Explanation of the Catechism of the Empire*, 9.

8. *How the Chinese Hear the Catechism.*—I know children who are apparently very decorous during Catechism; they do not stir, they seem to listen, and yet they pay no attention to what is said. Do you know who they are like, my young friends? They are like the Chinese or the Siamese, and I will tell you how. I have read in the *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, that on a certain day a zealous missionary had been exhorting his hearers in the most fervent manner; they all appeared very attentive, and the good missionary rejoiced exceedingly. Being anxious to know, however, what amount of fruit they

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had gathered from his instruction, he asked one of the oldest amongst them what was it that had particularly struck him during the instruction. "*What struck me most*," replied this singular hearer, "*was that your nose is very long!*" Another, to whom the Father put nearly the same question, answered simply: "*Father, you have such pretty buttons on your soutane that I can never tire of looking at them.*" And so it sometimes happens to yourselves, children; you amuse yourselves looking at something that takes your attention, and you do not hear what is said to you. Try for the future not to resemble the little Chinese.—*Annals of the Propagation of the Faith.*

9. *Napoleon Turned Catechist.*—You have all heard of the Emperor Napoleon the Great, but, perhaps, you do not know that he took pleasure in teaching the Catechism on the island of St. Helena. It happened as follows: Gen. Bertrand, his faithful companion in captivity, had a daughter about ten years old. One day the Emperor met her, and said—"My child, you are young, and many dangers await you in the world. What will become of you, if you are not fortified by Religion? Come to me to-morrow, and I will give you your first lesson in Catechism." For more than two years she went every day to the Emperor's quarters, where he heard her recite her Catechism, and explained it to her with the utmost care and precision. When she had attained her sixteenth year, Napoleon said to her: "Now, my child, I believe you are sufficiently instructed in religion; it

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is time to think seriously of your first Communion. I am going to have two priests brought hither from France, one who will prepare you to live well, and the other will teach me to die well." It was done accordingly, and this pious young lady who, as one might say, owed both her faith and her happiness to the Emperor Napoleon the Great, herself related these details to the bishop who assisted him in his last moments, in the month of August, 1845.—*Recompenses hebdomadaires* (*Daily Rewards*), No. XLVI., p. 10.

10. *Of what use is the Catechism?*—Do you wish to know, children, of what use the Catechism is to you? Hear a story which interested me much when I read it. A gentleman, whose name I do not remember, had a little girl of eight years old, who already attended Catechism. She listened attentively to the instructions, and tried hard to put all she remembered of them in practice. Her father fell dangerously ill. Seeing that no one ventured to warn him that he ought to receive the last sacraments, little Celestine thought she would do it herself, in order that she might meet him again in heaven. "My dear papa," said she, when she found herself alone with him for a moment, "you are very sick; I heard it said at Catechism that it is a great sin to die without Confession, and that then one cannot go to heaven. I would be very sorry if you died in that way, and you see no one dares to tell you that you ought to make your Confession." "I thank you, my dear child," said her

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father; "go immediately and bring me the priest. God bless you, I will owe my salvation to you!" The pastor came and administered to the sick man, who died next day. Before dying, he repeated several times: "Only for my dear child, what would have become of me for all eternity?"—NOEL, *Catechisme de Rodez*, I., 23.

11. *Must we Believe what the Catechism says?*—I once read, in a book translated from the German, a circumstance that impressed me very much. It relates to what the Catechism teaches us. It occurred in the United States. The daughter of an officer of rank* who passed for an atheist and an unbeliever, fell dangerously ill. It was on the night of the 12th—13th November, 1827. The poor girl appeared to have but a few moments to live. She sent for her father to her bedside, and taking him by the hand faintly addressed him in these words: "My dear father, I am going to die very soon: tell me seriously, then, I entreat you, whether I am to believe what you have so often told me, that there is neither God, nor heaven, nor hell,—or, what I learned in the Catechism that my mother taught me?" The father was thunderstruck; he remained for some moments silent, with his eyes fixed on his expiring daughter. His heart appeared to be torn by some violent struggle; at length he approached the bed, and said in a choking voice: "My child, my dear child, believe

* This officer was Colonel Ethan Allen, the hero of Ticonderoga.—TRANS.

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only what your mother taught you!" The astonishment of the unbelievers who heard him may easily be imagined. One of them who had long before abjured his religion, being asked what he thought, replied that *it was more pleasant to live according to his new religion, but it was better to die in the old.* There, my dear children, is how the impious themselves regard the Catechism at the final hour of death.—*Schmid et Belt, Cat. Hist.*, II., 47.

12. *The Ship Captain who Forgot his Catechism.*—I would never come to an end, children, if I were to tell you all the stories I know of the ignorance of those who have forgotten their Catechism. It sometimes happens that they make the most singular blunders. I knew an excellent priest of the Department of Vars (in France), who told the following anecdote in one of our boarding-schools: He made a pilgrimage once to the chapel of *Notre Dame de Grace* (Our Lady of Grace), near Honfleurs, a shrine much venerated by seafaring people. One day he had said Mass there, and was engaged in making his thanksgiving, when a sailor, coming up, pulled him by the soutane, and said to him: "Reverend Father, our captain has just got into the chapel; he wanted to hear Mass; wouldn't you have the kindness to begin yours again for him?" "But, my friend, I cannot say two Masses on the same day; that can only be done on Christmas Day." The sailor brought back this answer to the captain, but the latter, thinking that the Father Almoner only refused to say Mass because he

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was tired, went to him himself and said: "Reverend Father, I know you must be fatigued, but I am in no hurry; do me the honor to come and breakfast with me, and then you will be better able to say Mass." The priest who related the story had much trouble to make the ignorant captain understand that a priest cannot say two Masses on the same day, and that he must be fasting to say one. This story makes you laugh, my young friends, but it proves to you, at the same time, that people are liable to say absurd and ridiculous things when they are not well instructed in their religion.—*G. S. G.*

13. *The Dead Sailor Thrown in the Sea.*—Another story dear children, on the danger of being ignorant of the Catechism. It was related, not long since, to the pupils in one of our boarding-schools. A French merchant vessel, returning from America, had the misfortune to lose one of her crew. Now, when any one dies at sea, the body cannot be kept, on account of its corrupting so soon; neither can it be buried, the land being so far off. So it is sewed up in canvas, and cast into the ocean. I remember one of our Brothers being buried in this way, in 1857, precisely on his way back from America. Well! to return to our sailor, they wrapped him up in canvas, and set about committing him to the deep. They wanted to say some prayers first, and as there was no priest, each one gave his opinion. One said it would be well to recite a *Pater* and *Ave*. "That's too common," said another, "better say a *Miserere*." "That's too

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long," objected a third, "let us say the *Tantum Ergo.*" These poor fellows were so ignorant that they never thought of saying the *De Profundis*, and contented themselves with the *Tantum Ergo*, which, as you know, my friends, is sung when the Blessed Sacrament is to be exposed. Had they known their religion better, they would not have been so embarrassed.—*G. S. G.*

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CHAPTER II.

ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN?

I.—WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

14. *It is not sufficient to say that one is a Christian.* —I have read in the Acts of St. Tiburtius, martyr, a fact which is well adapted to prove the truth of what I have told you, my friends, concerning the title of Christian that we bear. That pious servant of God had remarked, amongst persons of his acquaintance, a man named Torquatus, whose conduct was neither edifying, nor becoming; he had even admonished him in private several times. The unhappy man, unable to bear these just reproaches, went to denounce Tiburtius as a Christian, and lest his base treachery should be suspected, he told the governor to have himself arrested. They were both brought before Fabianus, the Prefect, who commenced by asking Torquatus what was his profession? "I am a Christian," the hypocrite replied. "Believe him not," immediately answered St. Tiburtius, "he is a Christian only in name; he assumes a title of which he is no longer worthy, for his actions are a continual denial of it. In fact, Torquatus is a sensual man; he loves to

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frizzle his hair and ornament his person, he walks mincingly and affectedly, sleeps long of a morning, loves good cheer, loses much time at play, and is seldom seen at church. Men like that do more harm than good to religion." These new reproaches, which Torquatus so well deserved, covered him with confusion; he soon proved that the holy martyr was right, for he basely apostatized, whilst Tiburtius gave his blood for Christ. This took place at Rome, in the year 287. Let us watch over ourselves, my young friends, so that our actions may be always worthy of the name and quality of Christian, which we received in Baptism.—BOLLANDUS, *Acta Sanctorum, 11th August.*

15. *Louis de Poissy.*—The title of Christian is so fine a one that many princes have preferred it to that of king. You all have heard of St. Louis, who ascended the throne of France in 1226, at the age of twelve. That pious monarch was undoubtedly one of the most powerful kings of that age, and yet he preferred the glory of being a Christian. Many times, instead of signing *Louis, King of France*, he put simply, *Louis of Poissy*, because he had been baptized in that little town, which is situated at the edge of the forest of St. Germain en Laye, twenty-five or thirty miles from Paris. In the church there is still preserved the stone font in which that holy king received the sacrament of regeneration. It is much defaced and broken, because, for a long time past, almost every one that went to see it broke off a small piece to

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preserve as a precious relic. I myself have known persons who boasted of having committed that pious theft. As for us, dear children, let us be proud and happy to have the title of Christian, and let us beware of doing anything that might dishonor it.—*Life of St. Louis.*

16.—*The Adopted Child Disinherited.*—God has conferred on us a great favor, my young friends, in making us Christians; let us be more faithful than the unhappy man of whom I have read in the *Parables of Father Bonaventure.* A king of Persia, who had no children, took from off the street a poor little beggar child of six or seven years old, intending to bring him up and appoint him heir to his throne. The first thing done was to wash the child, comb his hair, and dress him in the new from head to foot. A preceptor was then given him, and masters to teach him all the arts and all the sciences that could embellish an education. But alas! at the end of two years, the king died; they hastened to open his will, and therein read as follows: "I adopt for my son the little Ali, whom I have taken from beggary and destitution; I wish him to be brought up and educated with all possible care till he shall attain the age of fifteen years. At that time, if he has corresponded with the care that has been bestowed upon him, if he be pious, prudent, polite, amiable and attentive to study, it is my will that he shall be placed on the throne of Persia. If, on the contrary, he became wicked, ungrateful, vicious, let him be stripped and turned

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away; he shall no longer be recognized as my son." This testament of the king was executed to the very letter; the little beggar was duly informed of it; care was even taken to read it to him from time to time, and to show him the brilliant throne that awaited him, if he answered to the views of his benefactor. Unhappily, he paid but little attention to it; now and then he made fine promises, but that did not last long. He became idle, careless, and rebellious; he disobeyed his masters, refused to study his lessons, ran the streets with urchins of his own age, in a word, appeared to care little for the throne that had been promised him. They waited, however, till the time appointed by the will; but as soon as Ali had completed his fifteenth year, they read to him once more and for the last time, the articles which concerned him, and asked him whether he could conscientiously say that he had fulfilled the conditions imposed upon him. The unhappy youth hung his head, reddened up to the eyes, burst into tears, threw himself on his knees, prayed, entreated, promised to amend. But all was in vain. The late king's brother made him leave off his fine clothes, gave him others of the coarsest and commonest kind and had him turned out of the palace. I am sure many of you, my dear children, have recognized yourselves in this story, which aptly represents what God has done for us by baptism; be faithful to that grace if you would inherit the celestial kingdom, if not you will be expelled like the king

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of Persia's beggar.—PERE BONAVENTURE-GIRANDEAU, *Stories and Parables.*

17. *The Beggar Heiress of a Kingdom.*—When you are asked—"*Are you a Christian?*" you answer: "*Yes, by the grace of God.*" It is a great honor, dear friends, to be a Christian, especially because of the titles which it gives us. M. Boudon, who was Archdeacon of Evreux, in the time of Louis XIV., relates a very touching story on this subject. A new church was being built in a town of that diocese, and each one gave what they could to promote this pious object. A poor old woman, who was reduced almost to beggary, came one day to the sacristy to the priest, who was receiving the offerings, and gave him three francs. "How, my good woman, you want to give me money! why it seems to me that I ought rather to offer you some, for I see by your clothing that you are very poor." "I poor! reverend father? Why, am I not a Christian, and consequently, daughter of a great king and heiress of a great kingdom? Have no fears for me, then, for I shall always be able to earn a living for myself, and I hope the good God will one day receive me into His eternal kingdom." Were not these noble sentiments, dear children? Well! what that woman said, every Christian may say.—DEBUSSI, *Month of Mary*, 127.

II.—THE CHRISTIAN'S SIGN.

18. *An Earthquake Yielding to the Sign of the Cross.*—"If you had faith even as large as a mustard

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seed," said Our Lord, "you would say to that mountain: Cast thyself into the sea, and immediately it would be done." In truth, dear children, the Saints have wrought wonders with the sign of the cross. St. Jerome, an illustrious doctor of the Church, gives himself an example in the life of St. Hilarion. After the death of the Emperor Julian the Apostate, there was a tremendous earthquake all over the East. The seas overflowed their bounds, as though they would have submerged the earth in another deluge. At sight of these prodigies, the inhabitants of Epidaurus, a small city of Greece, ran to the cell of St. Hilarion, and with tears besought him to have pity on them and come to their aid. They brought him to the sea-shore. There, St. Hilarion knelt on the sand, prayed with fervor, and made the sign of the cross three times over the troubled waters. Immediately there was a dead calm. All the people of Epidaurus witnessed this miracle, and for long years after they ceased not to remember it with gratitude.—Sr. JEROME, *Life of St. Hilarion.*

19. *St. Dorothy's Asp.*—If we had a very lively faith, we could work wonders with a single sign of the cross, as did the Saints of old. There was in the Egyptian desert a holy hermit named Dorothy, who had for a disciple, Palladius, a very pious and well-instructed young man. One day, at dinner-time, Palladius went, as was his wont, to draw water from a neighboring well. But scarcely had he approached it, when he perceived at the bottom, an asp, who had

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probably been drowned there. Seeing it, he ran back as fast as he could, to tell St. Dorothy. "Ah! father, we are lost! I saw an asp in the well! The holy man only laughed, and said, shaking his head: "What, my son, if the devil took a notion to throw asps and serpents into all the wells and fountains, you would then drink no more? Follow me!" St. Dorothy went to the well, drew up himself a bucket of water, made over it the sign of the cross, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, then drank of the water, saying: "All the power of Satan is annihilated in presence of the sacred sign of the Cross.—PALLADIUS, *Histoire Lausaique, Chap. II.*

20. *The Tree Thrown Down by St. Martin.*—There is nothing so powerful as the sign of the cross, provided it be accompanied with a lively faith, and a boundless confidence. We find many examples of this in the life of the great St. Martin, Bishop of Tours. I particularly remember the following: One day, having overthrown, in Burgundy, a famous and very ancient temple, he wished likewise to cut down a large pine-tree that stood near it. But to this he found the pagans entirely opposed, but they told him that since he had so much confidence in his God, they would cut down the tree themselves, provided he would stand under it when it fell. Martin accepted the condition, and allowed himself to be tied on the side to which the tree was already inclining. A great crowd of people assembled to see the sight. All the Saint's disciples feared for him, and looked

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upon him as a dead man. The tree, half cut, began, in fact, to fall upon him when he simply made the sign of the cross; the piece of wood, by a gust of wind, fell to the other side, to the great astonishment of the spectators who thought themselves the safest. There arose a great cry, and a large number of idolaters embraced the faith of Christ.—*Sulpice Severe, Life of St. Martin.*

21. *A Ravenous Woman a Cure.*—My young friends, it is not I who relate to you a story to-day; it will be a learned doctor of the Church, who lived in the fifth century—the Blessed Theodoret, Bishop of Cyr, in Syria. In his life of St. Macedonius, a famous solitary, he says that the holy man was surnamed *Crithophagus*, because, for forty years, he eat nothing but barley bread. He wrought many miracles, amongst others this: The wife of a rich nobleman had been seized with a malady called *dog hunger*, which some attributed to the power of the devil, others to a corporal infirmity. However that might be, this malady was said to be such, that the poor woman eat thirty fowls a day, and still unsatisfied, kept asking for more. As this expense could not much longer be continued, her friends, taking compassion on her wretched state, had recourse to the man of God. Macedonius came, began to pray, and had some water brought, into which he dipped his seal, and after having made the sign of the cross, he commanded this woman to drink of the water. Immediately she was cured, so perfectly that, from that time forward, one small piece of meat served for

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her daily nourishment. There is what was done by a sign of the cross made with faith.—THEODORET, *Eccles. Hist.*

22. *St. Benedict's Glass Broken Miraculously.*—The first who conceived the idea of founding a religious order in Italy, was St. Benedict, whose disciples still bear the name of Benedictines. The splendor of his sanctity transmitted his fame so far and wide, that certain monks who had lost their superior conceived the design of choosing him for their abbot. They were not very regular in their lives, these monks, and St. Benedict did not much care to take charge of a house where serious abuses were known to exist. But they urged him so much, and promised so faithfully to amend their ways, that he was at length induced to comply with their request. His first care, as he promptly announced, was to revive the observance of the holy rules which these men had somewhat laid aside. It was then that their ill-will appeared in its true light; they would not hear of reform, and they soon came to hate St. Benedict on account thereof, as much as they had before appeared to desire his coming. One of them even dared to form the horrible project of putting him to death. With that intention he prepared some poisoned wine which he presented in a goblet to the holy abbot. According to his custom, the latter made the sign of the cross over the liquor and immediately the goblet flew in pieces and the wine fell to the ground. This miraculous occurrence made him sus-

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pent that there was poison in it. He thanked God for having saved him by the sign of the cross, then departed from amongst those perverse men, who pretended to live as monks, whereas they were not even good Christians.—St. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues, Book II., Chapter 3.*

23. *Children Preserved from Death by the Sign of the Cross.*—The simple sign of the cross has wrought thousands of miracles; ecclesiastical history is full of them. Here is one which I find in the life of St. William, Archbishop of York, in England. He had made, in 1151, a pilgrimage to Rome, which had kept him long away from his diocese. His return was an extraordinary event for every one; all work was suspended, and young and old went out in crowds to meet him. The throng was so great that, passing over a wooden bridge over the river Ouse, on which the city of York is situated, the bridge gave way, and a multitude of people were precipitated into the river. At the sight, St. William is penetrated with grief; he stops, raises his eyes to heaven, excites his faith, and makes the sign of the cross over the river. Nothing more was required to save almost all those who had fallen into the water; the children, especially, were drawn out safe and sound; God had compassion on their innocence and their tender age. —Giry, *Lives of the Saints, 8th June.*

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FIRST PART.

ON THE TRUTHS WHICH MUST BE BELIEVED.

CHAPTER I.

ON MYSTERIES IN GENERAL.

24. *The Burning Glasses of Archimedes.*—A mystery is, you know, my friends, a truth which we are bound to believe, although we can neither comprehend nor explain it. Skeptics pretend to say that the mysteries of religion are incredible because they are absurd, and that they are absurd because they are incomprehensible. Well! that reasoning is not based on common sense, because there are hundreds of thousands of facts seen every day, believed and admitted without difficulty, although they are not at all understood. Here is an example: The Romans besieged the city of Syracuse, in Sicily, about 212 years before Christ. Their vessels surrounded the place by sea, so as to cut off all communication with other countries. The Consul Marcellus had been commanding there in person for full two years, and still the siege made little progress. To what was this owing? I will tell you. Amongst the inhabitants of Syracuse, there chanced to be a learned mechanician, named Archimedes, who had invented mighty machines

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whereby he grievously tormented the Romans. Now, he hurled on them masses of rock or stone, which sent their vessels to the bottom; again, he seized their ships and carried them out through the air, pretty much as you would catch a fish with a line. Now you will understand that no one would doubt these things if they had seen them. But there is something more incredible still. Archimedes invented a species of burning glasses, which so well directed the rays of the sun on the Roman fleet, that they set it on fire at a distance of more than 500 metres. Historians have not failed to record this fact, but our chemists and philosophers have laughed it to scorn, as a thing wholly impossible; "it is like the mysteries of religion, we will believe it when we see it." Well, my friends, it has been seen, for, in 1754, the learned Buffon, member of the Academy of Sciences, succeeded in constructing burning glasses like those of Archimedes, and in the month of April, when the sun is not yet strong, he could melt lead and burn wood at a considerable distance. Unbelievers have had their eyes opened, they have seen and were forced to believe.—G. S. G., *List of Discoveries*, 210.

25. *Subterranean Salt Mines.*—We sometimes meet with persons who say: "Oh! as for me, I do not believe what I see, but what I comprehend." These people are like the inhabitants of mines, who never go forth from the bowels of the earth, and refuse to believe what is passing in the world. In the neighborhood of Wieliczka, in Poland, there are vast

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salt mines, which have been worked for more than six hundred years, and are the abodes of entire families. In them are constructed houses, galleries, inns, and even a church, all of salt. Well! there are children who were born and brought up in these subterraneous regions; they have never seen any other lights than their lamps; they know neither the pure sky, the beauty of the country, nor the marvels of vegetation. If you speak to them of the sun that rises and sets every day, of the succession of day and night, of rivers and lakes, they know not what you mean; they may even suspect, at times, that you are mocking them, unless you chance to be one in whom they have confidence. So it is with the truths and the mysteries of religion; if we are reasonable, we will never say—"I believe only what I see."—NOEL, *Catechisme de Rodez*, I., 136.

26. *Why the Little Finger is Moved at Will.*—Speaking of mysteries, I will tell you a pretty little story of what happened to a boy of twelve or thirteen years, who was called Antoine, and who knew his Catechism perfectly. One day, going from Nancy to Luneville, he got into a diligence (as the old stage-coaches were called in France), for in those days, children, there were no railroads. In the same compartment with him there chanced to be a lawyer who was somewhat of a gossip, and must have his little word to say, *apropos* to nothing. Going through a village, the stage passed a church, and Antoine was in a great hurry to take off his cap in honor of the Blessed Sa-

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crament. "Ha! ha!" said the lawyer, "I perceive you go to Catechism; let us see what you learned there." "Sir," replied Antoine modestly, "I learned the principal mysteries." "You did, eh? And what are these mysteries?" "The Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption." "And will you tell me what is the Holy Trinity?" "Sir, it is the mystery of one God in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." "And you believe that, do you? If you do, you may believe anything that the priest chooses to tell you. Now, do you see, people should only believe what they understand." "And do you, sir, believe nothing that you don't understand?" "Of course I do not, no intelligent person does." "Will you, then, please to tell me, sir, why it is that your little finger moves when you want it to move?" "Oh! that is easy enough told; it moves because I want to move it, and the life that is in me makes it move." "But why does it move?" "Because I will it." "Yet your ears don't move when you will—how does that happen?" "Nonsense, little boy, you are too young to teach me! I pray you let me alone." The conversation ended there, for the lawyer perceived that the persons present were beginning to laugh at him, whilst applauding the shrewd observations of the young Antoine.—ABBE GRIDEL, *Christian Evenings*, I., 184.

27. *The Mysteries of Nature.*—I cannot explain mysteries to you, my young friends, because mysteries are above our feeble understanding; but I can

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give you some examples of natural mysteries, which will prove to you that it is not only in religion mysteries are found. You have, doubtless, seen wheat, and may probably know that a single grain is sufficient to produce an ear, which sometimes contains as many as fifty, sixty, eighty, and even one hundred grains. How does it happen that one hundred grains are contained in one? No one can explain, yet every one believes it? Well! my friends, that is what is called a mystery. If your parents were in Paris, in 1849, they probably visited the Exhibition of the agricultural and industrial produce of all France. Ask them if they saw the large ears of wheat that were shown as a curiosity. I remember a grain of barley, sown in a garden at Disonville, in the Department of Eure-et-Loir, which produced no less than one hundred and seventy-three ears, each ear contained at least seventy-five grains; so that this grain of barley contained in itself 12,795 grains! That surprises you, my dear children; well! it is only another mystery;—we see, we believe, but we know not how it can be.—*G. S. G.*

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CHAPTER II.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

28. *How the Apostles Composed the Creed.*—A learned ecclesiastic, named Rufinus, who lived in the year 400, assures us, on the authority of tradition, that the twelve Apostles, before they went their several ways to preach the Gospel, composed the Creed which bears their name. It is even stated that each of them drew up his own particular article; but that is not very certain. Still, it appears that there is yet preserved in the library of the Emperor of Austria, at Vienna, an old Greek manuscript, containing the Apostles' Creed, divided into twelve articles, bearing each the name of him who composed it. The first is ascribed to St. Peter; the second, to St. Andrew; the third, to St. James, the Major; the fourth, to St. John, the Evangelist; the fifth, to St. Thomas; the sixth, to St. James, the Minor; the seventh, to St. Philip; the eighth, to St. Bartholomew; the ninth, to St. Matthew; the tenth, to St. Simon; the eleventh, to St. Jude, otherwise St. Thaddeus; and, finally, the twelfth, to St. Matthias. I myself have seen, in an old book printed in the time of Henri IV., or Louis XIII., well-engraved portraits of the twelve Apostles, and around were written in large characters the article at-

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tributed to each of them. Thus, around St. Peter, there was, in old French: I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH; around St. Andrew: AND IN JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD; and so on with the rest.—GABRIEL PEIGNOT, *Amusemens Philologiques*, 6352.—*G. S. G.*

29. *The Creed Taught by St. John.*—So entirely does the Apostles' Creed contain the abridgment of the truths of our holy religion, that, in the first ages of the Church, not only was it never departed from, but the bishops taught nothing else. The learned Baronius relates in this connection, a fact which I am glad I remember now, in order to repeat it to you. Amongst the St. Gregorys, there was one who was surnamed Thaumaturgus, because of the great number of miracles he wrought during his life. He was still very young, when his virtues and talents caused him to be named bishop of Neo-cesarea, in Asia Minor, about the year 233. His first care, on reaching his new diocese, was to ask God to inspire him how best to instruct His people. One day being at prayer, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him with St. John the Evangelist. That good mother, for whom St. Gregory Thaumaturgus had a great devotion, besought the holy Apostle to grant him what he asked. Then St. John the Evangelist dictated to him the Apostles' Creed, just as we know it now: *I believe in God, the Father Almighty*, &c. St. Gregory preserved this copy so faithfully, that a hundred years after, it was still in existence; it was even cited in

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the fifth General Council, held at Constantinople in 553. From this we see, dear children, that the faith has undergone no change since the very days of the Apostles.—TILLEMONT, *Eccles. Hist.*, I., 375.

30. *The Little Martyr of the Creed.*—The Apostles' Creed, as I think I have already told you, is an abridgment of all religion; it was formerly taught only to those who were Christians, and that formula served to distinguish them from the pagans. Thus, when any one said: *I am a Christian*, the answer was: *Prove it by reciting the Creed.* I have read the history of a little saint of seven years,—I do not remember his name,—who was denounced to a wicked governor, named Asclepiades. He is brought before that man, who chooses to question him himself, and endeavors by caressing him to make him change his sentiments. "It is no use," answered the courageous child, "I am a Christian, as you shall see: *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, Our Lord*—" Asclepiades, in a rage, would not let him finish; having sent for his mother, he ordered a soldier to scourge him before her, so that she might herself urge him to adore the idols. Whilst his tender flesh was torn by the cruel lash, the youthful martyr repeated: *I believe in God, the Father Almighty*, &c. After some time, he turned to his mother, and said to her: "Mother, I am thirsty." "Courage, my child," replied the heroic mother, "have patience a little longer, and you shall reach the fountain of life; Christ

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himself will give you to drink." This sad spectacle drew tears from all who witnessed it; the tyrant only remained unmoved. Ashamed of seeing himself vanquished by a child, he caused his head to be cut off, and thus sent him the sooner to heaven.—PRUDENCE, *Crown of Martyrs.*

31. *Little Peter's Creed.*—As the Apostles' Creed is the abridgment of our faith, heretics have always regarded it with aversion. One day, little Peter, who since became a saint and a martyr, had returned from the school of Verona, in Italy, where his father had sent him. One of his uncles, who had the misfortune of being a heretic, felt curious to know what he had learned. He took him on his knee, and began to caress him, as uncles are wont to do, asking him what he remembered. "Uncle," said the child, "I learned my Creed: *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth,*" &c. "And do you know the meaning of all that?" "Yes, uncle, *Creator of Heaven and Earth,* means that God made all things of nothing, by His word alone; it was He that made the sun, the moon, and the stars; it is He that sends us heat to make plants grow, and rain to water them; so for that reason, we ought to love Him." His uncle, vexed and angry, let him say no more; "You must not believe such things," said he; "You are entirely mistaken," &c., &c. But do what he would, Peter remained firm, and persevered all his life in the true faith.—GODESCARD, *Vie de Saints, 29th April.*

32. *The Creed Written in Blood.*—St. Peter, sur-

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named the Martyr, who had shown so much zeal in teaching and confessing the Apostles' Creed, never failed himself. He entered the Order of St. Dominic, and was all his life employed in preaching the truth to those who, knowing it not, persecuted it. He was the scourge and terror of the heretics, and especially of the Manichæans, who in his time began to overspread Italy. They swore to compass his ruin, and being as cowardly as they were wicked, they hired two assassins to lie in wait for him on the road between Como and Milan. As he passed them by, one of the assassins fell upon him and struck him twice on the head with an axe. St. Peter Martyr was not killed at once; he raised himself up, forgave his murderers, and began to recite the Apostles' Creed in Latin. Then, dipping his finger in the blood that flowed from his wounds, he had strength enough to trace on the ground the word CREDO—*I believe*. His assassins, in a rage, stabbed him with a poignard, and he gave up his soul to God on the 6th of April, 1252. GOBESCARD'S *Lives of the Saints, April 29th.*

33. *An Old Man who was Ignorant of the Creed.*—Profit by the season of youth, my good young friends, to learn the Creed, for when age once comes, it is hard to remedy the misfortune of not knowing it. I have somewhere read that Cardinal Bellarmine being Archbishop of Capua, in Italy, assembled the children in his Cathedral, taught them their Catechism himself, and afterwards distributed rewards amongst those who had answered the best. On Holy Thurs-

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day of a certain year there happened to be amongst the twelve poor men whose feet the Cardinal was to wash, an old man nearly an hundred years of age. He asked him to recite the Apostles' Creed. "I never learned it," answered the old man, much ashamed; "no one ever taught it to me." At these words the holy Archbishop changed color, and for some moments could not utter a word. Bursting into tears, he exclaimed with a deep sigh: "What! there was no one in all the city of Capua, for the space of an hundred years, to teach this poor Christian the articles of faith?" And he immediately took measures that the unhappy centenarian might be instructed in the Creed before he died; it was a hard task, however, to get him through it, his memory being so sadly defective.—NOEL, *Catechisme de Rodez* I., 23.

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CHAPTER III.

FIRST ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth.

I.—THERE IS A GOD.

34. *The God Baal.*—All nations have believed in the existence of the Divinity, but they have not all had a very exact idea of it; they even gave not seldom to their idols the same passions and the same wants which are remarked amongst men. You remember, do you not, the manner in which the prophet Elias overcame the priests of Baal? One day he had them brought together to the number of four hundred and fifty, and he said to them before all the people: "How long will you halt between two sides? If the Lord be God follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him? Behold! I only remain a prophet of the Lord: but the prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty men; do you offer a sacrifice to Baal, and I will offer one to the Lord,—we shall see who will hear his worshippers?" The proposal is accepted; two altars are raised; the idolaters begin first, they sacrifice an ox to Baal and with one voice invoke him, crying, "O Baal, hear us! O Baal

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hear us!" They had cried so for several hours and nothing came. Then Elias began to mock them, saying: "Cry with a louder voice! Perchance your god Baal is talking, or is in an inn, or on a journey; or perhaps he is asleep, and must be awaked." And the wretched men cried as loud as they could, and even cut themselves with knives and lancets till they were covered with blood; all in vain, their sacrifice remained cold. At noon, Elias began in his turn. Soon, fire from heaven descended on the altar, consumed the ox which had been placed upon it, and thus proved that the Lord is the only true God. The false prophets of Baal were treated as they deserved, and the people of Israel abandoned that gross idolatry.—*III. Book of Kings*, XVIII.

35. *The God of Socrates.*—The ancient Greeks, who passed for the most enlightened people on earth, did not know as much as you do, my dear young friends, of the most important truths. They imagined that heaven was peopled with a multitude of gods, some great, others small. There was, however, one exception found amongst them. Socrates, that great Athenian philosopher; who lived more than four hundred years before Christ, was convinced, by studying the wonders of nature, and the admirable order that reigns throughout them, that there exists an Almighty Being, endowed with boundless intelligence, creator and preserver of all things. This conviction he endeavored to infuse into the minds of his disciples. He had long and magnificent conversations with

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them on this subject, which conversations have been preserved for us by one of the disciples, named Zenophon. Nevertheless, as Socrates spoke of the Divinity only in the singular, he was accused of slighting the gods of the country, and seducing youth by turning them away from the national religion. Socrates made no very long defence; he contented himself with saying that for thirty years he had never ceased to labor for the good of his fellow-citizens, and especially of his disciples. His enemies, incited by the devil,—who was doubtless jealous of seeing this sublime truth taught,—condemned him to death. He was forced to drink a cup of hemlock, which is a deadly poison, and Socrates died tranquil and resigned.—SCHMID et BERET, *Ch. Hist.*, I., 50.

36. *The Idol who has neither Arm nor Head.*—Nothing is easier than to make pagans understand the absurdity of a religion which admits a plurality of gods; a child of your age once perfectly convinced them of it. I am sorry I cannot remember his name. He lived in the same house with a very obstinate idolater. He often told him: There is but one God who has created the heavens and the earth; He it is that makes the sun to shine, and the dew and the rain to fall on the fields. But the pagan closed his ears, and would not be converted. One day when he was absent till evening, the child went into the room where he had his idols, and took them all to pieces. He spared only one, the largest, which was probably a statue of the god Jupiter. He placed a

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big stick in his hand and went away, closing the door after him. That night, or the following morning, the pagan entered his temple. Imagine his rage on seeing the ruin that was there. Who has done this? bring him here, whoever he is! I will kill him! I will sacrifice him on the altar of my outraged gods. It must be that young Christian that lives in the house. "Was it not you that did it?" addressing him when he came. "Why do you ask me that?" said the child with great composure; "don't you see that big statue there has a stick still in his hand; it must be he that did all the damage." "No, that is impossible; the statue could not even move his arm; but it was you, wretch! that did it!" "Well, now, don't be angry," said the child mildly, "if your statue is not even able to do what I have done, and I only a child, how can you believe that he is the God who from nothing made heaven and earth?" The unhappy idolater understood this reasoning, simple though it was, broke the last remaining statue, and, kneeling, adored the true God.—*Daily Rewards*, XXVIII., 8.

37. *Father Kircher's Globe.*—A famous German astronomer, Father Kircher, a Jesuit, wishing to convince one of his acquaintances who doubted the existence of a Supreme Being, made use of the following expedient: Just when he was expecting a visit from this gentleman, he caused a magnificent celestial globe to be placed in a corner of the room. Scarcely had the person entered, when he remarked the globe, and asked Father Kircher to whom it be-

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longed. The astronomer replied that it did not belong to him, that it had no owner. "Of course," he added, "it must have come there by mere chance." "You are jesting now," said the visitor. But the Father insisted on it that he was perfectly serious. At last, when he perceived that his visitor began to show some annoyance, he took occasion to address him in these words: "You will not believe, and would even think it foolish to admit, that this little globe exists of itself, and is found by chance in the place where founded, and knew not what answer to make to this so simple argument. He saw clearly how absurd it was to attribute to chance the admirable order which reigns throughout the universe.—SCHMID ET BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 54.

38. *The Savages Believe in a God.*—I have just told you that even the most savage nations have a notion of the Divinity. In proof of this I will give you the reasoning of a Greenlander, which was not so bad. Greenland, you know, is situated in the most frozen part of America. In 1721, the Danes, who are masters of the country, sent missionaries thither to preach the Gospel to the pagan inhabitants; several Greenlanders were converted and baptized. One of them was questioned, one day, by a traveller, who appeared surprised that they had lived so long in that state. "Indeed," replied the native, "we were poor and ignorant pagans; we knew nothing of God nor of Jesus Christ. Still you must not suppose that there were none of us to whom that thought had occurred. For

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me, I often said to myself: 'A boat with everything belonging to it, does not make itself; it must be constructed with much art, by a skilful workman. But a bird requires infinitely more art than the finest boat; nobody knows how to make one. But man is far above all other animals put together. Who made *him?* Whence came the first men? One might think they came from the earth; but why does not the earth produce them now? And the earth, the sea, the sun, the moon, and the stars, how do they exist? Surely somebody has done all that. And whoever did it must certainly be endowed with a power, a skill, a wisdom, far superior to those of the most expert man; he must be pre-eminently good, since all he has made is so useful and so advantageous to us.' It was thus we reasoned before you came to teach us the existence of the true God."—CRANZ, *History of Greenland.*

39. *An Atheist Viewed Through a Glass.*—If you chanced, my young friends, to meet one who said to you: "I do not believe in God—I am an atheist;" treat him as did a learned Jesuit father, whose story makes me laugh heartily whenever I think of it. He was called Father Oudin, and was born in the diocese of Langres, but resided usually at Dijon. One day there came to see him a dashing young man with a splendid moustache. "Reverend father," said he, "I wish to have a little discussion with you on the subject of religion." "Sir," replied the Jesuit, "I do not care to discuss our sacred truths with any one whatsoever; I would rather not speak of them."

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"Well, at all events," said the young coxcomb, balancing himself on one foot, "I should wish you to understand that I am an atheist." At these words, Father Oudin took hold of an eye-glass and deliberately examined our dandy from head to foot, an arch smile on his countenance. "What is there so strange about me, that you examine me so attentively?" asked at length the young scoffer, who began to feel ill at ease. "Oh it is just because I had never before got sight of the animal they call an atheist, and I took the opportunity to see how he is made." Hearing this, the strong-minded individual made his retreat as fast as he could."—PILASSIER, *Dictionnaire d'Education*, II., 43.

40. *The Atheist Saying his Beads.*—I confess to you, children, it is very convenient to play the skeptic and the free-thinker when people are well, and everything is going well with them; but there are moments when, in spite of them, they return to better sentiments. The famous Volney was once on a voyage with some of his friends, off the coast of Maryland, in North America. All at once a great storm arose, and the little bark which bore the flower of the unbelievers of both hemispheres, appeared twenty times on the point of being lost. In this imminent peril every one began to pray; M. de Volney himself snatched a rosary from a good woman near him, and began to recite *Ave Marias* with edifying fervor, nor ceased till the danger had passed. Some one approached him when the storm was over and said

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in a tone of good-natured raillery: "My dear sir, it seems to me that you were praying just now; to whom, pray, did you address yourself, since you maintain that there is no God?" "Ah! my friend," replied the philosopher all ashamed, "one can be a skeptic in his study, but not at sea, in a storm."—NOEL, *Catechisme de Rodez*, I., 73.

41. *The Child who Divines the Existence of God.*—I have sometimes told you, my young friends, that the idea of a Divinity is natural to man; God Himself has engraved it on the heart. I shall never forget a curious experiment made in Germany by a man named Sintenis. He had lost his wife, whom he tenderly loved, and who had left him but one infant son. He retired to the country, and devoted himself solely to the bringing up of this child, who was his only hope. It was then that he made the experiment to which I have alluded, and undertook to teach him himself the first elements of all the sciences: reading, writing, geography, natural history, German and Latin grammar, &c. He made it a point to avoid pronouncing before him, or having him read, the holy name of God, of whom no one ever spoke to him, in order to see if that precious knowledge would come of itself. These precautions had been carefully observed till the boy was ten years of age. About that time, M. Sintenis remarked that his son left his chamber stealthily every morning, and went into the garden, where he offered his homage to the sun. The father, seeing at once how the matter stood,

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took his son aside, and asked him seriously what he was doing. The child frankly acknowledged that for some time past he had been thinking that as all that exists could not possibly be made by themselves alone, he had been anxious to know the author of nature, and at last it seemed to him that it must be the sun, because by his mild light and his salutary influence, he made the crops and vintage, and all fruits, to grow and ripen. M. Sintenis lost no time in explaining his error, and making him know the true Author of all things; for himself, he was rejoiced to have acquired the certainty that the idea of the Divinity is almost born with us.—PERE GIRAUD, *Magasin pittoresque, Anno* 1844, *p.* 358.

42. *The Unbelieving Innkeeper.*—Does it not often happen to some of you, my young friends, that when you are taken by surprise in some way, you exclaim unthinkingly—"Oh! my God!" That shows that we believe in God almost involuntarily. Here is a story which goes to prove the fact: An innkeeper, having frequented bad company, had learned all sorts of impiety; he even became an atheist, that is to say, he said that he did not believe in God. Two very decent, worthy men once came to him for supper, and from six o'clock in the evening till eleven at night, he never ceased to annoy them with his senseless babble. He wanted to prove to them that there is neither God, nor heaven, nor hell. They endeavored to refute him, calling to their aid the Word of God, but, to everything they advanced, he only replied by mockery and

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sarcasm. The two friends were touched with compassion, seeing the blindness of this unhappy man. They retired to their respective homes, said their prayers, and went to bed. They had scarce been half an hour asleep, when they were roused by the cry of "Fire! fire!" from the street. It was the inn that was on fire, and the flames were already bursting in livid brightness from the roof. Being woke up by his two recent guests, the owner had no sooner perceived the dreadful havoc going on than he cried with clasped hands: "My God! oh, my God! God Almighty! God of grace and mercy! Have pity on me, and help me!" Here he was suddenly stopped by one of the others,—"How! wretch, you have been denying and blaspheming God all the evening, and you would have Him come now to your assistance! Confess now that there is a God, whom we must adore and serve."—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 43.

II.—THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

43. *What is God?*—One of the first questions of your Catechism, children, is this: "What is God?" The question is easy enough to put, but it is not so easily answered. The learned, and even the philosophers themselves are forced to confess their ignorance on that point. I have read a fine example of this in ancient history. Hieron, king of Syracuse, who lived nearly five hundred years before Christ, had admitted to his friendship a celebrated Greek philosopher,

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named Simonides. One day it came into his head to say to him: "Simonides, thou who art so learned, answer me this question: "*What is God?*" The philosopher, after a moment's reflection, said: "Prince, I will answer you in a day." On the morrow, instead of giving Hieron his answer, he told him: "Prince, I will answer you in two days." At the end of two days, he said again: "Prince, I will answer you in four days." At last, the king, believing that he did but mock him, began to feel annoyed, and would have the explanation of his conduct. "Ah! prince," replied Simonides, at length, "you ask me what is God.—well! I confess to you, that the more I reflect on that sublime subject, the less I understand it; it is a mystery that cannot be explained."—G. S. G., *Inventaire des Decouvertes*, 179.

44. *The Terrors of Nero.*—God is just, my young friends, and history is full of terrific facts which daily remind us of that truth. There are few as terrible as the history of Nero. That Roman emperor was a monster of cruelty, impiety, and luxury. After having reigned some years, he completed the measure of his iniquities by persecuting the Christians. It was then that the justice of God was manifested in him. One night Nero is suddenly awoke; he learns that his soldiers, and even his guards have revolted. He springs from his bed, half dresses himself, and calls for his friends; no one appears. Terrified, he goes forth from his palace and runs through the streets, but can find no one to receive him. Then,

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frightened himself at this utter abandonment, he wishes to kill himself; he asks for a gladiator to dispatch him, but none will come; he rushes to the Tiber to drown himself, but his courage fails him; he takes out a little golden box in which he kept poison, but it is snatched from his hands. At length a freedman offered him an asylum in his country-house; Nero mounted a wretched horse, and disguised in filthy, tattered garments, set out. All the way, he trembled like a leaf; the crowing of a cock, the sound of a footstep, the rustling of the wind, anything and everything sufficed to throw him into a cold sweat. Arrived at the house, he dared not enter, he contented himself with skulking around the out-houses, slaked his thirst with muddy and unwholesome water, and hid himself in the dwelling of a slave. His retreat was soon discovered; he was pursued, and the monster had no other means of escaping his enemies than to run himself through with his own sword. Thus it was that God punished, even in this life, the crimes he had committed.—SUETONIUS, *Life of Nero.*

45. *Death of the Emperor Valerian.*—The history of Nero presents a frightful example of the effects of God's justice in this life; that of Valerian, another Roman emperor, is not less capable of making us reflect. That unhappy prince, who lived in the third century, had persecuted the Christians, and put a great number of them to death. God permitted that, after losing a battle against the Persians, he fell into the hands of Sapor, their king, who exercised unheard-

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of cruelties upon him. He cast him into a gloomy dungeon, but without divesting him of his imperial robes, in order to humble him the more. Sometimes he had him brought forth in chains, made him kneel down, and forced him to bend his back, till he made use of him as a step to mount his horse. Finally, having overwhelmed him with insult and outrage of every kind, he caused him to be flayed alive, had his body salted, so as to keep it the longer, and his skin dyed red, he hung up in a Persian temple, to perpetuate the remembrance of the humiliation of a Roman emperor. In acting thus, Sapor gave still another lesson to the world: he manifested the justice of God who had permitted all these calamities to come upon the impious Valerian.—BERAULT-BERCASTEL, *Historie de l'Eglise*, I., 295.

43. *What Gods the Pagans Worship.*—Not only are there found in remote countries, my young friends, children who learn their Catechism, but many who are well instructed in it, as the following anecdote will prove. An Indian child, who was only eight years old, but had been carefully instructed by his pious parents, was once present in a public hall, where the chief men of the town were assembled. Knowing that he was a Christian, some of them began to rally him on his religion. The boy answered in the same tone, and with much spirit. After some disputing, on both sides, they at last said to him: "You have a great deal to say about your God—would it not be better for you to show Him to us?" "My

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God," the child replied, "is the Creator of all the universe; He is a pure spirit, and I cannot show Him to you, but I can easily show you yours." At the same time he took up a stone, on which with a little ink he drew a sort of likeness of a human face, then laying it on the ground with an air of mock ceremony, he made a show of praying, but afterwards kicked it away from him, crying: "There are the gods that you adore!" Every one applauded this sally of the child, and the sorry joker who had provoked it retired covered with shame and confusion.—REYRE, *Anecdotes Chretiennes*, 223.

47. *God is the Best of Fathers.*—We take pleasure in considering God in the point of view of His goodness rather than any other; hence it is, that when we speak of Him, we so often call Him *the good God.* He has more tenderness for us than even our parents themselves, although our fathers and mothers love us with all their heart; this is proved by the following example: A certain pious man had left nothing undone in order to give his son a good Christian education; but the bad disposition and stormy passions of the unhappy youth, rendered all the father's care useless. Going on from one excess to another, he came at last to stifle every feeling of nature. The spirit of cupidity, of libertinism, and of independence, made him form the project of putting an end to the life of him whose happiness he ought to constitute! The moment is fixed for the execution of this frightful parricide. The unfortunate father is made aware of it;

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he dissimulates, appears even more gay than usual, and, desirous of making a last effort, proposes to his son a walk in the country. The proposition is accepted. The barbarian is delighted to have such an opportunity of committing the crime which he meditates. The father leads him insensibly to a lovely place some way in a forest. Then, stopping suddenly: "My son," said he, "I love you, I know your design, and I am about to give you a new proof of my affection. We are alone, unseen by any one, your crime will be, therefore, unknown; here is my bosom, my son, and there is a dagger—strike! By dying here, I shall, at least, save you from the hands of justice; I shall save the life of my son." At these words, the young man, astonished, softened, throws himself at the feet of this good father, waters them with his tears and swears so to change his conduct henceforth, that he will never again be a cause of grief to him. There, my young friends, is a faint image of the goodness of God to men, even the greatest sinners!—Debussi, *New Month of Mary*, 272.

48. *The Clock and the Clockmaker*.—The simple view of the universe and the admirable order which reigns therein, suffices, children, to convince us that there is a God infinitely powerful, infinitely wise, and infinitely good. In proof of this, you may have probably heard the following little anecdote. A man of genius whose name I forget (I rather think it was Voltaire himself) happened to be present once in a large company where Religion was being blasphemed;

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he himself had joined in to a certain extent. But, at last, seeing that they were carrying the matter too far, pretending even to say that there is no God, and that the world made itself, he kept silence for some time. Some one turned to him at last, as if to say: "What do *you* think?" At the same moment, the clock struck eleven. Our astute philosopher contented himself with pointing towards it, and at the same time improvising the following lines, which he slowly recited:

"Pour ma part, plus j'y pense, et moins je puis songer
Que cette horloge existe, et n'ait point d'horloger!"

which may be substantially interpreted—"For my part, the more I think of it, I can the less imagine that yonder clock exists without a maker."

His friends looked at each other sheepishly enough, and muttering something about the lateness of the hour, retired foolish and ashamed, like people who felt they had got the worst of it.—*Daily Rewards*, No. 1, p. 7.

49. *Does the Good God Die?*—As regards the eternity of God, I have just remembered a rather amusing little story, which may interest you, my young friends. The father of a family, who had experienced all sorts of reverses, had conceived much sorrow and bitterness on that account. His wife shared his grief, but she suffered more from seeing her husband so prostrated, than from all the misfortunes they had met; she, therefore, did every thing she could to restore his happiness and contentment. For a long time her ef-

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forts were all in vain; her words of comfort thrown away. It was then that she tried by an odd stratagem to lead his mind back to better thoughts. One day she pretended to be very sorrowful and dejected; meet her when you would, she was still sad and silent. The husband, knowing his wife's natural gaiety and cheerfulness, was much surprised. He feared that some new misfortune had taken place in the house, and that she concealed it from him in order to spare him the pain of knowing it. He urged her to tell him the cause of a sadness which she could no longer conceal. "Oh! it is nothing; it will not last long; pray don't trouble yourself about it, for I assure you it is of no consequence whatever!" So she put him off with short, vague answers. For a long time she refused positively to tell the reason, which still more increased the alarm and excited the curiosity of her husband. Overcome at length by his repeated solicitations, she explained herself a little. "Ah, my dear, if you only knew what a sorrowful dream I had the other night. I dreamed that the good God was dead, and that all the angels, great and small, followed his coffin, weeping; I was very much troubled myself, and thought I should never get over the shock of it." "How ridiculous!" cried the man, laughing for the first time in a long period, "how could you dwell on such foolish fancies, especially now that you are wide awake? How could God die? Is He not eternal?" At that moment the smile that had so long vanished from the woman's face, suddenly re-appeared, and

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she immediately asked: "But are you quite sure of what you say? is it true that the good God is living still?" "Why, of course, He is living still," replied the husband, who began to fear for his wife's senses, "how can you talk so foolishly?" All at once the woman resumed her natural manner: "So much the better," she continued, "if our good God has watched over us for more than fifty years, how can you be so discouraged as you have been of late?" At these words, the worthy man understood the lesson which his wife meant to give him; he confessed that he deserved such a reproach, and ever after he, as well as his wife, put all their trust in God, who is so good to us, even when He pleases to afflict us.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 71.

50. *Where is God?*—If I asked you, my good little friends, "where is God?" you would, doubtless, tell me immediately, and without hesitation: "God is in heaven, on earth, and in all places." Well! I knew a little boy,—very intelligent and well-instructed he was, too,—who answered better than that. One day, returning from Catechism, he related at home all he had heard; his elder brother, already wearing a beard, and, perhaps, jealous of seeing him knowing so much at such an age, undertook to puzzle him. "Now, see here, George," said he, "I will give you an apple if you tell me where God is!"—"And I will give you two," said the little fellow, "if you tell me where He is *not*." At these words, every one clapped their hands, and it was generally agreed that George had

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answered the question as well as the priest himself could have done. There is what it is, my little friends, to know one's Catechism well.—NOEL, *Catechisme de Rodez*, I., 111.

III.—ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

51. *The Three Children in the Furnace.*—God is faithful in protecting those who have been faithful in serving Him. Amongst a host of examples which I might give you, my young friends, I will select that of the children who were cast into the furnace. They were three youths of the Jewish nation, companions of the prophet Daniel, and imitators of his virtue; they were called Sirach, Misach, and Abdenago. Some wretched courtiers of Nabuchodonoser I., King of Babylon, denounced them to that prince as obstinate fanatics, who practised a religion different from that of the empire. They suggested to him, at the same time, in order to convince himself of it, to have his statue set up, and to command all the people to adore it. Nabuchodonoser adopted the suggestion; he caused an enormous golden statue to be cast, representing himself, and by a public edict he commanded all the inhabitants of Babylonia to assemble on a certain day, on a vast plain near the city, in order to pay divine honors to the statue. The three youths went thither with the rest, because they belonged to the king's household; but, at the given signal, instead of prostrating themselves like

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every one else, they remained standing, and raised their hearts to God, groaning over the idolatry of those poor people. Nabuchodonoser, being very angry, condemned them to be thrown alive into a fiery furnace; he even ordered more wood than usual to be put in, so that the flames rose several cubits above the furnace. They took Sirach, Misach, and Abdenago, and they bound them with cords, in order that they might not escape. But God watched over them; the fire consumed only their bonds; the flames fell back on the right and on the left, and a refreshing dew fell on our young Hebrews, so that they walked in the midst of that fiery furnace without suffering any pain. They sang then an admirable canticle, in which they invited heaven, the stars, the earth, the trees, the fire, the sea, in a word, all creatures, to praise the name of the Lord. I need not tell you, my young friends, that the king was ashamed of having treated in such a manner these faithful servants of God; he had them taken from the furnace, and their accusers thrown in; the latter were consumed in an instant.—DANIEL, *Chap. III.*

52. *St. Patrick's Swine.*—The resources of Providence are infinite, and it watches over its children with a solicitude for which we can never be sufficiently thankful. Here is one of a thousand instances: St. Patrick, whilst still young, was carried off, and brought to Ireland as a slave, by a band of Irish pirates who had pillaged his father's house. He fell into the hands of a fierce barbarian, who placed him

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in charge of his cattle, with which he was often obliged to spend the night in the fields. Once in his sleep, he was warned to go to the sea-shore, and that there he should find his deliverance. He went accordingly, and found a ship about to sail, on board of which he was received after much and earnest supplication. The vessel was forced to put in at a barren and uninhabited part of the Scottish coast. The provisions were soon exhausted; several of those on board made excursions in all directions but without finding any traces of human habitation. Pressed by hunger, the companions of St. Patrick, who were pagans, besought him to address his God, adding that, if the God of the Christians was so powerful as they had heard, he would not fail to save them from perishing with hunger. Animated with a lively confidence, Patrick assured them that if they would only be sincerely converted to the true God their deliverance was near at hand. He himself began to pray in silence, and scarce an hour had passed, when they met a herd of swine. They went immediately to work to capture some, which furnished them with an abundant provision of food. They continued wandering about for twenty-four hours, but they suffered no more from hunger; they subsequently reached an uninhabited district and were converted.—GODESCARD, *Lives of the Saints*, 17*th March*.

53. *The Bark of St. Ignatius.*—Nothing is so admirable, children, as the confidence wherewith the Saints abandoned themselves to the guidance of

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Providence. You shall soon see that they act more rationally than the people of the world who at every step invoke prudence, foresight, and so forth. St. Ignatius Loyola had been on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. On his return, the vessel in which he had sailed landed him at the Island of Cyprus, where he awaited an opportunity to return to Italy. There were three different vessels in port; the first belonged to the Turks, who were little likely to admit a Christian on board. The second, a Venetian vessel, was spacious, comfortable, and well appointed. Finally, the third was small, old, and rickety. Several passengers interceded with the captain of the fine vessel that he might receive St. Ignatius on board, as he was a very holy man, and a worker of miracles. "I receive no one gratis," replied the captain, very shortly, "and besides, if he is a Saint, he has no need of my vessel, he can walk on the sea, like St. Peter." St. Ignatius was, consequently, obliged to content himself with the little rickety bark, that being the only chance left him. But what was the result? The three vessels set sail on the same day and in the same weather. All at once a frightful storm arose; the Turkish vessel was buried in the sea; the handsome Venetian vessel went to pieces on a sandbank, and every soul on board perished, and it was only the little bark that reached the port in safety, a few days after. Providence watched over its servant.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 365.

54. *The Child Buried Under Ruins.*—Divine Pro-

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dence never abandons us when we throw ourselves with confidence into its arms. Listen, my young friends, to what happened, in 1698, to a child, who related it himself. He was called Ciaborri, and lived in Italy, near the famous volcano of Vesuvius: "About five o'clock in the morning, I was with some of my companions, not far from the house of my parents, where we felt a violent earthquake, accompanied by a terrible shock. We immediately took flight; but, at the same moment, all the surrounding houses fell with a frightful crash, and we were buried under the ruins. All my friends lost their lives, with the exception of one who was stretched beside me, and who, though grievously wounded, was still not killed; as for me I was perfectly unhurt. As long as my friend lived we mutually consoled each other, and prayed together. But when he was dead his body emitted a horrible stench. Squeezed up as I was in a narrow space, my face rested against the decaying corpse; yet I never for one moment lost my presence of mind; I resigned myself entirely to the will of God, and ceased not to ask him every day for my deliverance. My greatest torment was thirst; that I endeavored to assuage by licking a stone, which gave me, in fact, great relief. My position would have been still more deplorable, if the Lord had not sent me a sleep so profound that the thirteen days of my captivity appeared to me scarce more than three. The thirteenth day was the worst of all; I was at the last extremity. Collecting all my strength,

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I cried out for help, calling my parents by their name. All at once I heard a noise, and observed a sort of motion overhead; I shouted still louder, and was heard. Ten persons, digging and working with all their might, at length drew me out; I had been buried some ten feet deep. I returned thanks to the Lord who had saved me from death in so miraculous a manner; I confessed that I owed my safety to Divine Providence alone."—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 110.

55. *The Missionary Astray on Lebanon.*—A missionary who had terminated his apostolical labors in the neighborhood of Mount Lebanon, received orders from his superiors to go elsewhere. "I set out with my companions," said he, "intending to repair to Bescomta, a village situated in the vicinity of the Druses. During my journey, I preached, heard confessions, and had the consolation of bringing many lost sheep back to the way of salvation. One day, I met, on my way, a father of a family, who was a Christian. On learning that I was the missionary of the district, he approached me, and besought me, with tears in his eyes, to go and hear the confession of his numerous family, because he and they had been long and ardently desiring to see a missionary. I asked him if he lived far away. He hesitated not to tell me that he lived in a very distant mountain, where he and his family were in a manner deprived of all intercourse with their fellow-creatures. I was constrained to tell him, to my great regret, that I could

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not comply with his request, seeing that I was under strict orders to repair to Bescomta. I did all I could to console him, but he kissed my hands and urged me, saying: 'Father, you will come; yes, you will certainly come to my house, and even sooner than you imagine, for we will pray so fervently, that the good God will be sure to hear us.' I continued my journey, without reflecting on these last words; I visited several villages, and then hastened to reach my destination. But, as we had no guide, we got lost in the mountains, which caused us much fatigue. After passing the whole night protecting ourselves from bushes and briers, we suddenly found ourselves near a farm-house, situated alone in the midst of a dismal waste. We entered immediately. What was my surprise, when I recognized in the master of the house the man who had, a few days before, so earnestly besought me to visit him! The words he had pronounced on leaving us were accomplished. We were welcomed as the messengers of heaven, and the work of my mission was crowned with the most consoling success. The harvest was ripe, for, on the assurance of the master of the house that a missionary would certainly come, all the inmates had duly prepared themselves; they received the Sacraments with a devotion and a recollection truly touching. As to me, I inscribed on the tablets of my heart: 'Thanks to the wisdom and the mercy of God, who has shed the dew of His grace on this lonely dwelling!'"—*L'Ami de la Religion.*

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56. *The Desponding Joiner.*—Father Beauregard had just preached his famous sermon on *Providence*, when he saw a man enter his house who said to him: "Father, I have heard your sermon; you have spoken well, but I am come to tell you that I am a living proof of the contrary of what you said. There is no Providence for me." "How, sir, what words are these for you to speak?" "Well, father, you may judge for yourself; I am a joiner by trade; I have a wife and three children, we all work hard, and we have never done harm to any one; for twenty years have I been trying to serve the Lord and live as a good Christian; I have always put my trust in God, hoping that He would come to my assistance; but all in vain; and I confess to you I am ready to throw myself in the river, for I have bills coming due the 30th of this month, which I am entirely unable to meet: I am lost—dishonored—and I would rather die than live." "Well, my dear friend, you shall yourself become a sensible monument of Divine Providence. How much money do you want?" "Ah, father, how good you are! With less than 3,000 francs, I am saved." "My friend, there is 2,500; I could not have been so happy as to give it to you myself, but some days ago, the Princess de Conti, after hearing my sermon on *Alms*, sent me that money, authorizing me to use it in whatever way I thought proper, for the relief of the unfortunate. Go, then, meet your engagements, and never forget that there is a Providence."—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, I., 113.

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57. *Vision of a Christian who Doubted Providence.* —We often meet with people who are willing to admit that God created the world, but are yet of opinion that He gives Himself no more trouble about it, and lets it go entirely by chance. This thought is a blasphemy and an absurdity. I once read of a worthy man, and a good Christian, moreover, who was tormented by this doubt; it seemed to him, seeing the good sometimes afflicted and the wicked prosperous and happy, that God takes no heed of us or our affairs. He had a dream, which he related as follows: "I dreamed that I was on a journey, and had somehow lost my way. I knew not how to get out of my difficulty, when I saw a traveller coming along, who kindly offered to show me the way. I followed him with joy. He soon brought me to the house of a man who received us with open arms, and treated us very well. But on setting out, my guide, instead of thanking him, stole from him a silver goblet, which he put in his wallet. Next evening, we lodged at the house of a wretch who did nothing but eat, drink, and blaspheme, and who could scarcely be persuaded to let us pass the night in his garret. My companion, on going away, made him a present of the goblet he had stolen. The third night we slept at the house of a gentleman who appeared very rich, but at the same time very good and charitable; and yet, instead of being grateful to him for his kind reception, my strange conductor made me rise before day, set fire to his house, and decamped as fast as possible.

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Finally, we were entertained that night by another gentleman equally kind and hospitable. Next day, my guide, pretending that he did not know his way, asked our host to send his eldest son with us for a short distance. We had scarcely journeyed half an hour when my wretched companion laid hold of our youthful guide and threw him from a bridge we were passing into the river. This foul deed so excited my horror and indignation that I said to him: 'Monster, I will go no farther with you; I would rather take my chance anywhere alone, than keep company with such a wretch——.' I was going to continue my reproaches, but all at once a man appeared brilliant as an angel, and said to me in a tone of mingled sweetness and majesty: 'You are wrong, my friend, in finding fault with what I have done. First, I took the goblet because it was poisonous; secondly, I gave it to the wicked man, to punish him; thirdly, under the ruins of the house I burned, the owner will find a treasure that will make him much richer than he ever was before; fourthly and finally, the youth I drowned would have murdered his father, had he been spared, and caused his mother to die of grief. Cease, then, to blame the way in which Providence governs the world, because all in it is wisely foreseen and carried out.' After these words the angel disappeared, and I awoke, resolved not to question, for the future, the way in which God rules the world."—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 125.

58. *A Leg Broken for My Good.*—Whatever hap-

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pens to us, my little friends, let us accustom ourselves to submit with resignation to the will of God: we shall never repent of doing so. That reminds me of a story curious enough to be related to you. A worthy man, who lived, I think, either in Picardy or Normandy, had the pious habit of saying every moment "All that is for my greater good." One day he was on the point of embarking for England, the vessel was about to sail, and our man was a little late. He runs at full speed, but in the midst of his hurry he falls with his bundle under his arm, and breaks his leg. "Well! it is all for the best!" said he aloud before all the people who had gathered round to assist him. Much astonished at this, several persons asked how an accident that prevented him from setting out as he intended could be for the best. "I don't know," said he, "but Divine Providence knows, and that is sufficient for me." Some days after the news arrived that the vessel in which he was to have sailed had gone down, with all her passengers and crew. Every one saw then that the broken leg had been really a fortunate accident for this worthy man, seeing that it had saved his life.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 121.

59. *The Soldier Without Legs or Arms.*—God is just, my young friends, and sooner or later He permits that the sinner shall expiate his crime. Sometimes He waits till death, because He has eternity before him; but, often too, He strikes the guilty even in this life, in order that their chastisement may tend to

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their sanctification. Father Debussi cites a terrible example of this in his *Month of Mary*. Towards the close of the great French Revolution, a venerable priest was doing all that zeal and charity could dictate in an hospital where there was a very large number of sick and wounded. Some one told him of a poor soldier who nad been horribly mutilated; he felt curious to see him. He approaches and sees a man whose face announces calmness and resignation. "I was told, my friend, that you have been badly wounded." "Sir," replied the soldier, "if you raise the clothes a little, you will see." He raises the bedclothes accordingly, and starts with horror on perceiving that the unfortunate man has lost both his arms. "What! you are shocked at so small a thing? Raise the covering off my feet!" He does so, and discovers that the poor soldier has also lost his legs. "Ah my poor child! how I pity you!" "Do not pity me, father, I only got what I deserved. I was going to join the army with my comrades; we met on the way a cross, which the Republicans had spared; nothing would serve us but we must pull it down. I was one of the most active; I climbed up, and with my sabre broke the arms and legs off the Crucifix, which fell to the ground. After this sacrilege we continued our journey. A few days after there was a battle, and at the first discharge I was reduced to the state in which you see me. I well deserved it, praises be to God, who spared me to repent and do penance before I die. He is just; if He punishes me

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in this world He will spare me in the next."—DEBUSSI, *New Month of Mary*, 63.

69. *The Tailor Without Work and Without Bread.*—In a village of Germany lived an honest tailor, whose name was Herman. He had managed for twenty years to provide for his own wants and those of his family, as well by constant labor as by his regular and irreproachable conduct. He had never known, therefore, what it was to suffer from hunger. Yet the famine which broke out in 1770 reduced him to the greatest misery; he was often three or four days without work. It became necessary to dispose of everything, even the most indispensable articles of furniture. One morning Herman rose without knowing how to procure food for the day; his children gathered around him, crying for bread which he had not to give them. It was heartrending to him to hear them, but the only answer he could give them was to point to heaven, then hastily turn away his head to hide the tears that filled his eyes. He retired then to an adjoining room, where he knelt down and addressed the Lord in this prayer: "My God, how miserable we are, I and my children: Shall I have to endure the bitter pain of seeing them die of hunger? O, Thou who givest food to the little birds, wilt Thou let my children die? No, Thou wilt not; Thy mercy is greater than our wants; ah! come to our assistance in our sore need!" Just as he finished his prayer, one of his children came running to say that a countrywoman desired to speak with him; she came to

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ask him if he could manage to have suits of clothes made in the space of three days for her three sons, who were going to take part in some festival for which they required them. By way of inducing him to hurry the more with the work, she presented him with a basket full of bread, flour, butter, meat, and various other eatables. At this sight the children, wild with joy, clapped their hands, and began to jump about the room by way of testifying their delight. As to the father, he said nothing; he could only raise his eyes to heaven, and thank God in the depth of his soul. He related, then, to the generous countrywoman his sad situation, and how he had promised food to his children without knowing in what way he was to procure it. The good woman was moved by this sad story. She promised that for the time to come she would let him want for nothing, and would assist him from her abundance until it should please Heaven to send them better times. The poor family were beside themselves with joy; as soon as their benefactress was gone, they prepared dinner, and thus was verified once again the consoling words of Our Divine Lord: "Come to me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., p. 108.

61. *Two Little Girls Shot Without Being Killed.*—During the war which the partizans of Queen Christina of Spain maintained against the friends of Don Carlos, a circumstance occurred which evidently proves that the more we are in need, the more willing

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God is to lend us His aid. One of the Carlist leaders was attacked by a band of the Christinos, who drove him from his post and obliged him to fight as he retreated. Besides the loss of a great number of soldiers, the General had also to deplore that of his two daughters, who, having accompanied their father, had fallen into the hands of the enemy. It was not long, however, before he received reinforcements, with orders to recover the post that had been captured by the Christinos. He was the more anxious to do this, as the safety of his dear children was at stake. Whilst he was preparing next day to lead his troops to the field of battle, the enemy was seen advancing to meet him. But how great was the dismay of this unhappy father when he perceived that his two daughters were placed in the van of the hostile army, in order that they might serve as bucklers for its protection. How could he order his men to fire? Would not the first balls that were fired pierce the hearts of his children? Such were the thoughts that rushed on his mind and threw him into despair. Duty compels him to fight bravely against the foe, but his paternal love will not permit him to make his own children the first victims of his too great ardor. His soldiers themselves shared his feelings; but what was to be done? there was no time for deliberation, so controlling his emotion as he best could the Spanish General commended his children to the protection of God, and gave the word to fire. After a discharge so murderous, he fully expected to see his two daughters lying

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dead on the ground. O prodigy of prodigies! he beholds them standing unhurt in the midst of the dead, whose corpses strewed the plain. Assured, then, of the protection of Heaven, so wonderfully manifested on his behalf, the General ordered his men to charge home with the bayonet. The enemy is put to flight, and the post is recovered. But what most rejoiced every one was the truly providential preservation of the two young daughters of the Spanish General.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 112.

IV.—MYSTERY OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.

62. *Baptism of Our Lord.*—The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity was manifested in a very special manner at the Baptism of Our Lord, for we there find distinctively the three divine persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as you are doubtless aware, my dear children! Jesus Christ, having reached the age of thirty years, prepared to preach the Gospel to men. But He would first receive Baptism, not to efface original sin, since He could not be sullied by it, but to give water the virtue of effacing it in those who should afterwards receive that so precious Sacrament. He, therefore, quitted Nazareth, in Galilee, and went to find St. John the Baptist, who was preaching on the banks of the Jordan, in order to be baptized by him. After having, through humility, made some objections, St. John did as He desired. Our Lord then went down bare-

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foot into the river, which was not deep, and His holy precursor poured water on His head. At the moment when Jesus came forth from the water, engaged in prayer, the heavens opened, and the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of a snow-white dove, resting on His head. At the same moment a voice was heard, as if from Heaven, saying: "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" You can easily distinguish here, my young friends, the three persons of the Blessed Trinity: the Father, who speaks; the Son made man, who is baptized; and the Holy Ghost who rests upon Him.—*St. Matthew*, III.; *St. Mark*, I.; *St. Luke*, III.

63. *Origin of the Gloria Patri.*—The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, my dear children, has always been honored in a very particular manner in the Church. All the Sundays of the year are, in some measure, consecrated to the Blessed Trinity; but, in order to honor it still more specially, the Church adopted the custom of reciting very frequently in the liturgy, the *Gloria Patri*. The learned Cardinal Bona thinks that the first part of that prayer, which is called the *little Doxology*, was composed by the Apostles themselves. It is composed of the following words, which you all know by heart: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." The same learned authority informs us that it was the Council of Narbonne, in 589, that first ordained the singing of it at the end of each psalm. The Arians and some other heretics having changed some words

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in the *Gloria Patri*, to justify their errors, the General Council of Nice, held in 325, added to it the words which form the second part, namely: "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." As often as this beautiful prayer is repeated, it is a pretty general custom to bow the head, as if to honor and salute more particularly the three Divine Persons. But it is not the case, as stated by the learned Ferraris, that Pope John XXII. granted an indulgence of thirty days as often as the head was bowed in this way.—PASCAL, *Origine et Raison de la Liturgie Catholique*, 507.

64. *St. Barbara's Three Windows.*—I have read in the Lives of the Saints a story that edified me much, and which relates precisely to the Blessed Trinity. It is recorded in the life of St. Barbara, Virgin and Martyr, whom the artillerymen, I know not why, have chosen for their patroness. That Saint had always had a great devotion for the three persons of the adorable Trinity. Her father was a pagan, and as she would never abjure the Christian religion to please him, he had her shut up in a high tower, as yet unfinished, then set out on a distant journey. St. Barbara having remarked that there were only two windows in the apartment intended for her, prevailed on the workmen, after many entreaties, to put in a third, because it was her intention to consecrate them to the three divine persons. When her father returned, and saw that his plan had not been carried out, and, moreover, that Barbara was the cause of the

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alteration, he became furious. But his rage increased still more when he found that his daughter was as firm in her faith as before. Maddened by this conviction, he threw himself on the youthful virgin, who ceased not to invoke the Blessed Trinity, and ran her through with a sword he held in his hand. This was in 396. This holy martyr is honored on the 4th of December.—St. John Damascene.

65. *The Sea in a Little Hole.*—St. Augustine, one of the greatest doctors of the Church, was walking one day on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. He was meditating on the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, and sought to fathom it, in order that he might be able to explain it the better in a work he was about to compose, or in sermons he might have to preach. He was absorbed in this inquiry, when he saw a little boy carrying water continually from the sea, in a small shell, and throwing it into a hole which he had made in the sand. "What is that you are doing, my little boy?" said St. Augustine. "I am trying to put all the water of the sea in this little hole." "But, my dear child, that is impossible," resumed the holy bishop, laughing heartily at the child's artless simplicity; "do you not perceive that the hole is too small, and the sea too large?" "You think, then, that I shall not succeed? Well! I can assure you it will be easier for me to put all the water of the sea into this little hole, than for you to comprehend or explain the doctrine of the Holy Trinity." No sooner had the child spoken these words than he disappeared.

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It was an angel who had taken that form to give St. Augustine this important lesson. The learned doctor thanked God for such a favor, and gave himself no further trouble endeavoring to penetrate inscrutable mysteries.—ST. AUGUSTINE, *Confessions.*

V.—GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR.

66. *Did God Make the Flies?*—One thing I wish you to remember, my young friends, and that is, that the heart is always spoiled and corrupted before the mind becomes skeptical and unbelieving. This is exemplified in all infidels. I might cite a thousand examples, but I prefer to give you one that you do not know, one that I read in an excellent book entitled "The Practice of Christian Perfection." St. Augustine relates that a certain man, a Catholic, being much annoyed by the flies which incessantly troubled him, was visited by a Manichean, to whom he told the inconvenience he experienced, and the irritation which he could not help feeling in consequence. The Manichean, thinking this an excellent opportunity to insinuate his heresy, which was, that there are two principles in all things: one invisible, which is God, and the other visible, which is the devil. "Now, who do you think," said he, "created those flies?" The Catholic, who found them so troublesome, dared not say that it was God. "Well, if it be not God," resumed the Manichean, "who was it that made them?" "I believe it was the devil." "But," per-

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sisted the tempter, "if it was the devil that made the flies, who, then, made the bees, which are a little larger?" The Catholic, having just said that God did not make the flies, could not well say that He had made the bees; so it was that on account of the little difference he saw in the size of the insects, he answered that if God had not made the flies, it was plain He had not made the bees. The Manichean, seeing that, led him farther little by little, passed from the bee to the grasshopper, which is a little bigger, from the grasshopper to the lizard, from the lizard to the sparrow, from the sparrow to the cat, from the cat to the sheep, and thence to the ox, the elephant, and finally to man, ending by persuading this impatient Christian that God did not create man. See into what an abyss he fell, because he could not bear patiently so trifling an annoyance as that of the flies!—RODRIGUEZ, *Christian Perfection*, III., 98.

67. *The Acorn and the Gourd.*—When you come to read the Fables of La Fontaine, children, you will find one of them, in particular, very amusing; it is called *The Acorn and the Gourd.* A country boor took it into his head to criticise everything, without knowing what he was saying. He wondered much, for instance, that the oak tree bears no other fruit than acorns no bigger than one's finger, whilst shrubs, and even the frailest stems, bear fruit of enormous size, such as melons, gourds and pumpkins. "If I had the charge of all that," said he aloud, "I'd be sure to hang the biggest fruit on the biggest tree; that

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stands to reason." Whilst his mind was running on these reflections he sat down under a spreading oak, and it was not long till he fell asleep. He had slept for some time when an acorn, falling on his nose, woke him up with a start. He raised his hand to his face, and perceived that it was bleeding. "Mercy on me!" he cried, "a little bit of an acorn to make me bleed! Why, now, if it had been a gourd, I'd have had my head smashed, for certain! I see, after all, that what God does is well done."—La Fontaine, *Fables*, *Book VI.*, *Fable* 4.

68. *Vaucanson's Duck.*—To create is to make something from nothing, and that can only be done by God alone. That reminds me of some fine lines, for which we are indebted to Father Lemoyne, a learned Jesuit of Chaumont, in the Department of Upper Marne (in France); he says, in his poem of *St. Louis*, (we give the literal, but not the versified translation)

> "And those vast fields of azure and of light,—
> Drawn from the empty void, and without matter form'd,
> Rounded without a compass, and without pivot hung,—
> Scarce cost one single word."

Physicians, mechanicians, chemists, nay, even jugglers, make some surprising things, which suppose superior genius; but, once more I say, they do not make these things of nothing; they must have tools, instruments, substances wherewith they may work. The most curious thing that was ever made was probably Vaucanson's duck. That famous mechanician

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amused himself with making a little wooden duck, in which he concealed a great number of very fine springs, most skilfully disposed. When he had finished, people came from all parts to admire his automaton. The duck was thrown into a piece of water, and every one could see it swim by itself, open its wings, shake them briskly, pick up grain with its bill, swallow, digest and pass it out just as a live duck would do. You may suppose, children, that the spectators were all amazed; they clapped their hands, and felicitated Vaucanson on his wonderful genius. And yet what is that to the works of God, who, at a word, created all this vast universe, and whose word keeps it perpetually in motion? —*Magasin pittoresque*, Annee 1833, 160. G. S. G.

69. *The Windows of a Lonely Chapel.*—I have told you, my young friends, when speaking of the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity, that *power* is attributed to the Father; hence we say of Him that He is the "Creator of heaven and earth." All that God has made is stamped with the character of infinite wisdom. I have somewhere read a story of a traveller who was not quite of that opinion, but really fancied that the world would have been better if things had been all arranged as he would have them. Passing one day through a wild forest, he perceived a little chapel which he was curious enough to enter. But instead of praying, he began to criticise all he saw, especially a little window, the glass of which was very ancient and very gloomy in appear-

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ance. "What stupidity!" said our pilgrim, "how could any one put *that* in a chapel? Would it not be better to glaze that window with clear, white glass? It is just like the world, where all goes wrong and everything is done in direct opposition to common sense!" He was going on with his wise reflections, when the sun shone full through the window. Heavens! what a magnificent spectacle! That glass, but late so unsightly, presents a brilliant picture. In it is seen the bush, the name of GOD written in letters of fire, Moses prostrate on the earth, the flocks of Jethro grazing in the green meadows, &c., &c. At this sight the carping critic forgot all his humor; he could bite off his tongue for having spoken so rashly in his ignorance. He understood, then, that all that God does is well done; if it seems otherwise to us, it is because we see it the wrong way.—CANON SCHMID, *the Flower-basket.*

VI.—OF THE ANGELS.

70. *Hagar in the Desert.*—Hear the story of Hagar and Ishmael; in it you shall see, my little friends, how the Angels are sent by God to have care over us. Abraham had had a first son by Hagar his bondswoman and his wife. Seven years after, he had another, named Isaac, by Sara, his second wife. These two children were brought up together, but Ishmael was not always as kind as he ought to have been to his brother Isaac; on the contrary, he often teazed

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and annoyed him, as is too often seen amongst children of that age, my little friends! Sara could not endure this treatment of her son, and she complained of it to Abraham. The latter having consulted God, resolved to send away his bondswoman, with his son Ishmael. Rising very early one morning, then, he called them to him, and giving them a loaf of bread and a pitcher of water, sent them away. Hagar departed sorrowfully, and wandered several days in the solitude of Bersabee. When the water given her by her master was all drank, she expected to die in the desert; then she placed Ishmael under a tree, and lay down herself under another, so as not to see her son die. All at once an Angel appeared to her, and reproached her for her despondency. "Arise!" said he, "take thy child by the hand, and bring him up with care, for he shall be the father of a great people." Hagar arose at the bidding of the Angel, and she saw at the same moment a fair spring of fresh water, which had just burst forth at her side. Thanking God, she went to find her son, and brought him up in that desert, where he became a skilful archer. He himself had, afterwards, twelve sons, and became the progenitor of the great nation of the Arabs.—*Genesis, Chap. XXI.*

71. *Raphael Conducts the Young Tobias.*—The finest example I can give you of the care which our Guardian Angel takes of us is that of Raphael, the sage conductor of Tobias. The father of that young man feeling himself growing old, summoned him to his bed-

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side, and, after some pious admonitions, said to him: My son, I wish to tell you that when you were yet very young, I lent the sum of ten talents to a man of our tribe, named Gabelus, who dwells now at Rages, a town in the country of the Medes. You must go to him for this money, for which here is his own bond. His son, going out into the street, met a young man of pleasing aspect, who appeared ready to start on a journey; he asked him some questions, and learned from him that he knew the way to Rages, and that he even knew Gabelus very well. Tobias brought him to his father, who asked him if he was willing to accompany his son. "I will," replied the unknown, who was no other than the Archangel Raphael, "and I will bring him back safe and sound." "May your voyage be happy," cried then the old Tobias, who had been blind for many years; "may God be with you on your way, and may His Angel accompany you!" They set out after bidding farewell to the old man and his wife, who wept much at parting. The Angel of the Lord watched carefully, as he had promised, over his young companion. The very first evening of their journey he saved him from a monstrous fish that would have devoured him as he was washing his feet on the bank of the Tigris. At the end of twelve days they arrived at Rages, where they lodged at the house of an Israelite named Raguel. The Angel then said to Tobias: "Raguel is of your blood; God has destined his daughter for your wife; if you follow the counsel I will give you

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you shall escape the misfortune that has come on several persons who have already married her. As for Gabelus, he is no longer here; I know where he lives, and will go bring him hither; he shall be present at your wedding, and will give you your money. We shall then return to your father and mother, who are anxiously expecting you. All was done as the Archangel said; they returned with joy to Nineveh, where the old Tobias dwelt, and restored his sight in a miraculous manner. Finally, when the Angel of the Lord had accomplished his mission, he made himself known, then vanished from the eyes of the astonished and grateful family.—*Tobias, Chap. V. et seq.*

72. *The Angels of Judas Maccabeus.*—You all know, my young friends, the story of the Archangel Raphael, who accompanied Tobias on his journey, and took such particular care of him and his affairs. Sacred History contains many other facts of a similar kind. Here is one that will interest you: Judas Maccabeus, Prince of the Jews, long maintained a difficult war against the King of Syria. Timotheus, general of the Syrians, marched against him in full force. Collecting a large army, principally of foreigners, he led them towards Judea. Hearing this, the Jews were sore afraid, being far inferior in numbers, and they saw that their only hope was in the assistance of Heaven. Prostrate before the altar, with ashes on their heads, Judas and his men besought the Lord to have mercy on them and come to their assist-

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ance. They then advanced against the Syrians, and at sunrise the two armies met in open field. Valor and determination were equally manifested on both sides, and the victory was still undecided, when all at once were seen coming down from heaven five men, mounted on horses with bridles of shining gold. Three of them put themselves at the head of the little Jewish army, and the other two placed themselves on either side of Judas Maccabeus. A complete victory was, of course, gained over the Syrians; they lost 20,500 men, and 600 horses. Well! these five radiant horsemen were no other than Angels, sent by God to sustain His people in that emergency.—II. *Maccabees*, X., 24–38.

73. *Little Gregory's Angel Guardian.*—It is related in the life of St. Gregory, Bishop of Tours, that when he was still a child his father fell dangerously ill. Gregory, who loved him very much, prayed fervently every day for his recovery. One night when he was fast asleep his Angel Guardian appeared to him and said: "My child, you will relieve your father; do what I am going to tell you. When you rise in the morning write the name of JESUS on a little piece of wood, and, without saying anything, place it on the pillow under your good father's head. The first thing little Gregory did when he awoke was to run and tell his mother what had been revealed to him by his good Angel Guardian; she charged him to go immediately and do as he had been told. He did so; wrote the name of JESUS on

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a small piece of wood, and thrust it gently into his father's pillow. O prodigy! scarcely was it there when the father found himself cured, and Gregory gave thanks to God and his good Angel.—*St. Gregory of Tours.*

74. *The Angel Guardian of a Child in the Cradle.*—See, dear children, how carefully our Angel Guardian watches over us. Amongst the French soldiers who fought in the wars of Spain and Portugal under Napoleon I., there was one who related the charming story which I am about to tell you. The French army had reached Villafranca, situated on the Tagus. The soldiers, rambling through the streets of the city, found at the door of a deserted house, a poor little infant not a year old, lying in a cradle. I forgot to tell you that the city had been bombarded by the English; all around were seen ruined buildings, heaps of rubbish, with splinters of shells and bombs, which had penetrated the thickness of the walls. And yet amid all this desolation, the cradle had remained untouched, because the child's Angel Guardian had protected it in a very special manner. The first who perceived the cradle was an old grenadier, who gently raised the covering, and was amazed to see the pretty, smiling infant that lay beneath. Every one wondered at the sight, and the whole regiment must needs see it. A goat was procured to suckle the little orphan, and as long as the regiment remained at Villafranca, the men took good care of it. When they were ordered elsewhere, the old grenadier took the cradle

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and child with him; but, finding that he could not keep the infant always, he gave it in charge to a good woman in a neighboring village, giving her all the money he had about him, and entreating her to take very good care of it till it should be claimed by its parents.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 166.

75. *Holy Guardian Angel, Pray for Her!*—Oh! my dear children, if you only loved and trusted as you ought, your Angel Guardian, how he might assist you in your greatest difficulties! Here is one instance, of a thousand that could be given, which proves it beyond dispute. It is not an old story, either, for the circumstance occurred in 1843, at Aigen, a small town in the Tyrol, one of the provinces of Austria. It was the 5th of September; a joiner had been piling up some wood which had been brought him; he had built it up to a considerable height, and went to remove the ladder on which he had been standing. Suddenly the pile shakes, the whole mass of wood topples down, and buries under its ruins the joiner's little daughter, but two and a half years old, who was sitting on some chips on the floor. Imagine the despair of the child's parents; they ran in all haste, but their first word, their first feeling was this: "Holy Angel Guardian of our child, pray for her!" They hastened to remove the wood, using the utmost precaution for fear of new accidents. Every moment seemed an age to these worthy people, who expected nothing else but to find their child lifeless. They were mistaken; their prayer had been

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heard; the little girl had not even a scratch. I need not tell you how thankful they were to the good Angel who had protected her.—*Gazette Instructive et edifiante*, Sept., 1843.

VII.—OF THE DEVIL.

76. *A Note Written to the Devil by a Saint.*—It is a curious thing to see, children, how weak and powerless the Devil is in presence of a man of faith. A simple sign of the Cross, some drops of holy water, a word even suffices to put him to flight. Listen now to what I am going to tell you. St. Gregory Thaumaturgus was once on his way to Neocesarea, a city of Asia Minor. Being overtaken by a storm, he was obliged to take shelter with his travelling companions in a pagan temple, famous in that country, because the demon gave oracles therein. His first care was to pray to God, invoke Our Lord Jesus Christ, and make the sign of the cross several times, to purify the air polluted by the smoke of pagan sacrifice. They spent the night quietly, and set out next morning very early. Meanwhile the sacrificer of the temple came to perform his sacrilegious rites; but in vain did he call upon his gods, the demons only appeared to tell him that they were going to depart from that temple, and had no longer any power there, because of what had taken place over night. Furious at this result, the pagan priest hastened after St. Gregory and threatened to denounce him to the magistrates,

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for having penetrated into the temple and disturbed its ceremonies. The holy bishop heard him very calmly and merely answered: "Friend, the demon whom you serve is so weak and powerless, that I have only to say one word to make him either depart from a place or return to it again." "If that be so," said the sacrificer, "make him return to the temple." St. Gregory tore a small scrap from his book, and wrote on it these few words: "Gregory to Satan:—Enter!" He gave this note to the priest, who placed it on the altar of the temple, and again commenced his sacrifices; the demons appeared as usual. The priest was so struck by this prodigy, which manifested the weakness of his gods, that he went again in search of St. Gregory and became a Christian.—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 55.

77. *St. Anthony and the Devil.*—You have doubtless remarked, my young friends, that St. Anthony is always represented with devils near him, who are seeking to torment him. That is because this great solitary was really tempted very often, without the devil ever being able to conquer him. He may, indeed, tempt us, and incite us to evil, but he cannot force us; this he once acknowledged to that same St. Anthony. One day when he was in prayer in his monastery, he heard a knocking at the door. He goes to open it, and sees a man of gigantic size. "Who art thou?" he asked. "I am Satan," was the reply." "How! and wherefore comest thou hither?" "I come to complain to thee. Why is it that all soli-

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taries and all good Christians misuse me as they do? Why have they nought for me but maledictions?" "They curse thee," the holy anchoret replied, "because thou doest them evil." "*I* do them no evil; it is themselves who do it; for me, I have no more strength, no more power; there remains to me not a single place where I can rule as a master; everywhere there are Christians, even in deserts and the most frightful solitudes. Let men, therefore, watch well over themselves, and I shall do them no harm; let them, then, cease to curse me."

Thereupon, the devil vanished, and St. Anthony having closed the door of the monastery, hastened to relate to his monks what he had just told him.—St. Athanasius, *Life of St. Anthony.*

78. *The Demon of Alexandria.*—Oh! my friends, if you only knew how much the devil covets us, you would be ever on your guard against him. St. Peter aptly describes him as "a roaring lion that goeth about seeking whom he may devour." But he pursues with still greater ferocity those who are good and faithful; the others, he is always sure of having. "One day," says the author of the *Fathers of the Desert*," a holy solitary being in prayer, was transported in spirit to the interior of a monastery where there was more than three hundred monks. He saw there an incredible number of devils following the religious everywhere; to the dormitory, the refectory, the garden, and especially to the chapel. They seemed to be pulling them, pushing them, distracting

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them in every way, in order to lead them to evil. The holy anchoret was then transported to the city of Alexandria; but he was much astonished to see there only one devil, who was sitting over the gate of the city, looking as though he had little to do. Surprised at this singularity, he asked himself what it could mean. An angel gave him to understand that the devils are very numerous and very busy in monasteries, because the monks resist them all they can; whereas there was only one required for the whole city, because the people of the world are prone enough to evil of themselves. Let this lesson serve for our instruction, dear children; since the devil is ever seeking to tempt us, let us resist him with all our strength.—Rodriguez, *Christian Perfection*, V., 379.

79. *The Devil at the Death-Bed.*—It is especially in our last moments, dear friends, that the devil tries to tempt us; but he has fair game with sinners. A rich man named Chrysacrius lived long in a state of scandalous profligacy. "He was," says St. Gregory, "a grovelling soul, whose affections were divided between avarice and debauchery. His excesses wearied Divine justice; he was seized with a malady which insensibly reduced him to the last extremity. But before his soul was separated from his body,—by the just punishment of God, who would punish that sinner even in this world, his eyes were suddenly opened, and he perceived around his bed a crowd of demons, of hideous and revolting aspect, waiting to drag his soul to hell. Seized with terror at the sight,

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the rich man trembled in every limb, and a cold sweat bedewed his brow; though hardly able to speak, he succeeded, by a violent effort, in calling his son Maximus to his assistance. "Maximus, my son," cried he in his terror, "Maximus, run quick! Remember, my dear Maximus, I have never done *you* any harm—come, then, and protect me!" Maximus, hearing these cries, flies to his father's bedside, and very soon the whole family surround it. In vain do they look on every side: the devils are only visible to the eyes of the dying man. The others were only aware of their presence by the terror of the criminal. Frightened out of his senses, he threw himself on his bed, hoping to escape the sight of that furious crowd. He turned now to the persons present, now to the wall; but everywhere he met those infuriate enemies pursuing him. At last he cried, with all his remaining strength: "A truce! a truce till to-morrow morning!" It was in the midst of these despairing cries that the wretch breathed his last.—Debussi, *Month of Mary*, I., p. 218.

80. *Who Created the Devils?*—If I asked you, my little friends, who created the Angels, you would answer immediately and without hesitation: "God." But if I asked you who created the Devil, what would you answer? I have somewhere read of that question being put to three little boys, very good boys, too. But their replies were very different. They were the sons of M. de Genoude, one of our most celebrated modern writers. René answered plainly

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that it was quite impossible that God had created the Devil, because he made nothing but what was good. Guy did not venture to reply, for it seemed to him that the question was put only to give them a lesson. Finally, Henri, the most sedate and rational of the three, answered, after some reflection: "God created him an Angel, but he made himself a devil by his sin." This admirable reply was loudly applauded by all present, and it was generally agreed that the young Henri could not have given a better answer.—GUILLOIS, *Explication du Catechisme*, I., 127.

VIII.—OF MAN.

81. *Creation of Man.*—Man is composed of a body and a soul. By his body he differs but little from the animals, but by his soul he resembles God. Do you remember, dear children, how man was created? God had already made, of nothing, the heavens and the earth, as well as the sun and all the other stars; already had He made the terrestrial animals to roam in the fields and woods, the birds to fly in the air, and the fish to sport in the waters. All that was good, but there was wanting a rational creature who could render to God the free and willing homage due to Him. The Lord seemed then to consult with Himself and He said: "Let us make man to our own image and likeness, that he may have dominion over the earth and rule the beasts of the earth, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea." He took, then,

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a little clay, formed thereof the body of man, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living creature. These last words show that He created a soul to unite to the body. Some time after, God sent on the first man, who was called Adam, a mysterious sleep, during which He took from him one of his ribs, from which He formed the body of the first woman, who was named Eve. To that likewise He united a soul, and gave the woman to Adam for a companion. From these two persons all mankind are descended, and hence it is that we call them our first parents.—*Genesis*, I. and II.

82. *The Story of John the Dwarf.*—Since we are men, we must endure the miseries which are inseparable from our nature, and not do as was done by a solitary, about whom I will tell you a rather amusing story: This was St. John, surnamed the Dwarf, because of his diminutive stature. He inhabited the desert of Scete in Egypt. One day he said to his elder brother: I wish I was like the angels, who live without any trouble, have no need of working, and are incessantly occupied in praising God. Therefore, he quits his home, and betakes himself to the depth of a wilderness, where he spent the days and nights in praying or singing the praises of God. At the end of a week, he came back by night and began knocking at his brother's door.—"Who is there?'—"It is I!"—"Who is *I?*"—"I am John, thy brother; open speedily, for I am dying with hunger."—"Oh! John is no longer a man like others; he is an angel,

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and prays to God all day long; he could not be hungry, for, thou knowest, the angels never eat."—"Pardon me, good brother, I told thee that, I know, but I told thee wrong; I see now that as long as we are on the earth, we shall be subject to the miseries of humanity." His brother then rose and let him in, thinking that the lesson might be of profit to him.—Pere Michel-Ange Marin, *Vie des Peres des deserts.*

83. *The Doctor's Dream.*—You may, perhaps, never have reflected on one thing, my young friends, namely, that the dreams we have in sleep prove the existence of our soul and its distinctness from our body. St. Augustine himself speaks of this in his letter to Evodius. He relates that one of their friends, named Gennadius, who had practised medicine at Rome, and came afterwards to settle in Carthage, entertained some doubts concerning the resurrection and eternal life, being unable to understand how that could be. He was wrong to reason so, for if we only believed what we understood, we should not believe much. Nevertheless, as he was otherwise a good Christian, God was pleased to enlighten him. One night, Gennadius dreamed that a young man of great beauty approached him and said: "Follow me." They set out and soon arrived in a strange city, where they heard music of the most ravishing sweetness. The guide then said to the physician: "This music which thou now hearest is the singing of the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem." On his waking, Gennadius paid little attention to what he had

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heard; he thought it was only an ordinary dream. The following night, the young man appeared again to him in a dream and asked if he knew him. "Certainly," said Gennadius, "I saw you yesterday, and we journeyed together." The mysterious guide took occasion to give him a lesson on the things wherein he had doubted. He told him: "You spoke, heard, acted during your sleep; your body was in your bed; it was motionless; its eyes were closed; it was not it, therefore, that journeyed, saw, heard. Well! it was your soul that did all that; and, after your death, it will likewise be it that will see, hear, act." Thereupon, Gennadius awoke; he had comprehended, and no longer doubted.—St. Augustine, *Letter to Evodius.*

84. *Singular Reasoning on the Soul.*—In relation to the soul, which is in us, but which we do not see, although we sensibly feel its presence, I have read of a young libertine who was not ashamed to say that he had no more soul than the animals. He was once in a steamboat on the Seine going to Paris. People kept shrugging their shoulders at the absurd and ridiculous things he uttered every moment. But there were three persons there who did not content themselves with laughing in their sleeve. "If we have no soul," said one of them, "we are only lumps of flesh, pretty much the same as my dog, whom you see there gnawing a bone." "If we have no soul," added the boatman, "it must then be said that nothing exists only what we see." "Precisely so," replied the libertine. "See now if nothing exists that we do not see," cried

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the boatman, much excited by a gale of wind which made his vessel reel at the moment; "now I maintain, good sir, that we have a soul as sure as there is a wind," and he gave him a smart rap on the shoulder with his oar. "In short," said a third, "the gentleman has proved to us with much *spirit* that he is *only a brute.*" This, children, is, undoubtedly, singular reasoning; but no other can be employed with any one who has renounced common sense.—REYRE, *Anecdotes Chretiennes.*

85. *I will not be a Horse.*—There can be nothing more absurd than the notions with regard to the soul entertained by nations who have not the happiness of being enlightened by the true faith. The East Indians, the Siamese, the Thibetians, and many others imagine that, after a man's death, his soul passes into the body of an animal, and even successively into the bodies of several different animals. A missionary relates on this subject a somewhat droll affair of which he was himself a witness: "Amongst the persons whom I baptized this year," said he, "there was an old man of seventy. He was poor, having no other means of living than the trifling pension which he annually received from the Emperor of China. The bonzes or priests of the country had put it into his head that after his death his soul would pass into the body of a horse which should be destined to carry the Emperor's dispatches. 'Ah! but,' added these impostors, 'see that you don't, when you come to be a horse, turn restive and throw

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your rider; take good care that you don't either stumble, or kick, or bite any one; if you do the gods will punish you.' They had got his imagination so stuffed full of these foolish notions that at times the poor man actually fancied himself a horse already; then he would go down on all-fours, jump, prance and neigh to the great amusement of every one that chanced to witness this strange sight. Thus it was with him when he came to hear of our holy religion; he was made to understand that, amongst us, one is not exposed to become a horse, or any other animal whatsoever, because that after our death the soul goes straight to God, to be judged, and rewarded or punished according to its works. This so rational doctrine pleased him, he sought and obtained instruction, demanded baptism, and died some days after in great sentiments of piety.'—NOEL, *Catechisme de Bobec*, VI., 221.

86. *My Horse and My Soul.*—A preacher who was giving a mission in a considerable village, put up at the house of the lord of the manor. Seeing a groom one day rubbing down his master's horse with great care, he amused himself chatting with him a little: "My friend," said he, "how many times a day do you see to your horse, to keep him in such good condition?" "I don't know exactly, Reverend Father, but I spend as much as two hours on him every day." "That is a great deal, my child, and I see, accordingly, that your horse is superb. But, tell me, how much time do you give every day to the care of your

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soul? to purify it, to sanctify it, to render it better, in a word, to work out your salvation?" "I will soon tell you that, Reverend Father: Every morning I make the sign of the Cross, I say an 'Our Father,' sometimes a 'Hail Mary;' on Sunday I don't often miss Mass, but I'm best pleased when it's a short one. That's all." "Ah! my poor friend, since you take so little care of your soul, and so much of your master's horse, I would rather be your horse than your soul. And yet, what will it profit you to earn a thousand francs a year, if you come to lose your soul for all eternity?" I know not, my young friends, what the honest groom said or did on hearing that, but, I am sure, if he had common sense, he would have acknowledged his fault, and tried to amend his ways. And let ourselves profit by this lesson, and beware of giving more care to our body than to our soul.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, I., 185.

87. *The Empty Bottle.*—It is wrong to conclude, children, because we do not see the soul, that there is none in us. Let me tell you, in this connection, a droll adventure that happened to a young man unhappily imbued with bad principles. He had commenced teaching school in order to earn a living; you may guess what kind of religious education he was likely to give his pupils. Being invited once to dinner, towards the end of the repast, he takes in his hand a glass of wine and cries with enthusiasm: "Let us eat, drink, and be merry while we live, for when we are dead all is over." "Yes," said the host,

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"it will be all over with your body, but what of your soul, my dear sir?" "My soul! and pray what is a soul? have you seen one? as for me, I only believe in what I have seen." "In that case, my good sir, there are many things in which you do not believe. Now it seems to me that there are many beings in existence which we never see. Hold! you who are so learned, tell me what is in that?" And so saying, the gentleman held out to him a white glass bottle closely corked. Our young coxcomb takes the bottle, turns it round and round, looks through it, puts it to his nose, and says at last: "It smells of brandy, and yet I see nothing inside." "I assure you, sir, you are mistaken, for my bottle is full of something that you do not see." At the same time, uncorking the bottle, the host plunges it into a pitcher of water, and from it came forth large bubbles, which burst at the surface, according as the bottle fills. "What is that, sir?" he asked of the teacher. "By my word, I believe it is only air, after all!" "Ah! it is air, is it? and the bottle was full of it just now? why then did you not see it? You see there are in the world many things that exist which we cannot see. It follows, therefore, that the soul may exist without our seeing it." The schoolmaster, confused and ashamed, took his hat and his umbrella and made his exit. Two hours after he thought proper to leave a village where people believed that they had a soul.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, I., 184.

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CHAPTER IV.

SECOND ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord.

88. *A Woman Cured by Touching Our Lord's Garment.*—In order to convince one's self that Jesus Christ is God, it is only necessary to see the miracles which He wrought during His life. I could tell you, my young friends, of more than a hundred; but as you can read them yourselves in the Gospel, I shall relate only one: Our Lord was surrounded by a crowd of people, who followed Him eagerly to hear His holy word. All at once a woman was seen dragging herself along, a well-dressed woman, too, for she was very rich; she was unhappily afflicted with an issue of blood, from which she had been suffering for twelve years, without being able to obtain any relief. She glided softly and stealthily through the crowd, saying to herself—"If I had only the happiness to touch the hem of His garment, I should surely be healed." Having at length succeeded in approaching Our Lord, she touched Him respectfully, and was immediately cured. No one had observed her except Jesus, who made a motion, and said aloud: "Who has touched Me?" His Apostles, quite sur-

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prised, answered Him: "Lord, no one touched Thee; it is because of the crowd pressing Thee on every side." "I say some one has touched Me, for I felt a virtue going out from Me!" The poor woman who had been cured trembled as though she had done wrong; she drew near, and confessed all. But Our Lord, who had doubtless done that only to make manifest her faith and her confidence, reassured her and said: "Fear not, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole."—*St. Matthew*, Chap. IX.

89. *The Philosopher Struck Dumb.*—You, doubtless, know, my young friends, that Constantine was the first Roman emperor who became a Christian; that was in the year of Christ 312. One day when this pious prince was at Byzantium, which is now the city of Constantinople, the pagan philosophers came to complain to him that their religion was despised. They asked his permission to open a discussion with the bishop of the Christians, named Alexander. He was a holy man, but had not spent his whole life studying like the philosophers who wished to attack him. He presented himself, nevertheless, full of confidence in his God, and requested his adversaries to choose one of their number to confer with him. Their choice fell on a most skilful and practised orator. No sooner was he in presence of St. Alexander than, forgetful of his age and the decorum proper to be observed on such an occasion, he commenced a proud and arrogant harangue, as though he had already won the day. The holy bishop, turning

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towards him, contented himself with saying: "In the name of Jesus Christ, whom I serve, be silent!" He had no need to say more; the philosopher was struck dumb on the moment, and could thus convince himself that religion consists not in fine words or self-sufficient airs.—SOZOMENES, *Eccles. Hist.*, Book I., Chapter 18.

90. *How the Impious Arius Died.*—Are we not happy to confess, my very dear children, that Jesus Christ is God? And yet there was once an unhappy deacon, named Arius, living in Alexandria in the fourth century, who dared to maintain that Jesus Christ is not God. This impiety was rejected with horror by the whole Church; it was only the ignorant and the perverse who declared themselves followers of Arius. After having disturbed the peace in the East and in the West, and banished St. Athanasius, their most formidable adversary, the Arians carried their audacity so far as to attempt to force Alexander, bishop of Constantinople, to receive the heretic into his church. The holy bishop would never consent to it; penetrated with profound sorrow, he went to prostrate himself at the foot of the altar and cried with tears in his eyes: "My God, if it be Thy will that Arius should enter into Thy Church, let me die before I witness such an outrage; but if Thou wilt have compassion on my Church, suffer not that he enter therein!" Meanwhile, the heretics, regardless of the bishop's refusal, would execute their impious project. On the following day they assembled in full

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force, and set out on their march towards the church. It was a grand ovation; heresy prevailed; to hear the Arians, it was all over with the Catholics. They had reached the great square called Constantine's, when Arius suddenly turned pale, grew sick, and was obliged to enter the public privy, in the sight of all. They waited some time for his return; but going at length to see why he tarried so long, they found him dead! The justice of God had overtaken him at the very moment when his impiety seemed most to triumph.—TILLEMONT, *Eccles. Hist.*, VI., 296.

91. *Julian the Apostate Seeks to Rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem.*—The miracles of Our Lord prove His divinity, but no less do His prophecies. Of these the last one in particular has been much celebrated; it is that in which he said, speaking of the Temple of Jerusalem: *There shall not remain of it a stone upon a stone.* The Emperor Julian, the Apostle, who lived in 362, undertook to falsify this so clear prediction. He announced to the Jews that he was going to rebuild their temple, inviting them to lend their aid. He attracted the most skilful workmen from every country, employed whole troops of laborers, and committed the superintendence of the work to Alypius, one of his most devoted officers. The Jews flocked to Jerusalem from every quarter of the world; they exulted, and published everywhere that the Kingdom of Israel was about to be re-established. They feared not even to insult the Christians in a thousand ways, because they felt themselves support-

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ed by the imperial power. What remained of the ancient temple was easily destroyed, so that the Scripture was literally fulfilled, and not one stone left on another. With the same facility were the foundations dug out anew. But, as soon as the first stones were laid, there came a tremendous earthquake, which cast the stones forth to a great distance. Fierce whirlwinds arose, too, and carried off the sand, lime, and other materials, which had been heaped up in immense quantities. But what was most terrible, as it was most evidently supernatural, great globes of fire issuing from the building and rolling in all directions with frightful rapidity, threw down the workmen, cast them forth, consumed them body and bones, and reduced them to ashes. The flames even sought and destroyed the hammers, pickaxes, chisels and all other tools which were stored away in a separate building. A torrent of fire winding through the place and shooting hither and thither burned or stifled the Jews, whom it seemed to distinguish from the Christians, and even from the pagans. The dread phenomenon was renewed several times in open day. By night, the Jews perceived on their garments, crosses so indelibly stamped that, do what they would, they could not efface them. A luminous cross was also seen in the heavens, from Calvary to Mount Olivet. The obstinate children of Israel failed not to return several times to their work. They encouraged each other to persevere, hoping to secure the favor of the apostate prince. Every time they were re-

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pulsed in a manner equally fatal and miraculous; so that many of them, and a still greater number of idolators, openly confessed the divinity of Jesus Christ and asked for baptism. This truly wonderful prodigy has been recorded, not only by all the ecclesiastical writers, but by several pagan authors, and especially Ammien-Marcellinus who lived in that time. St. John Chrysostom even adds that, in his time, the foundations dug out by the Jews were still wide open and plain to be seen.—Reyre, *Anec. Christ.*, 28.

92. *Good Day, My Little Friend!*—That as God, Jesus Christ is entitled to the same homage as His Father, is evident. There occurs to me now a pretty anecdote on this subject, that will, I know, both amuse and instruct you, my little friends! St. Amphilocius, Bishop of Iconium, in Asia Minor, being at Constantinople, and seeing that the Arian party was still prevailing, urged the Emperor Theodosius to pass a law forbidding them to hold their assemblies and blaspheme the Son of God. But, although the Emperor was zealous for the Catholic faith, he did not think it expedient to grant this request, lest he might be accused of too great severity. Nevertheless, the holy bishop was not discouraged, and in order to obtain by pious address what had been refused to his earnest supplications, he came to court a little after Theodosius had declared *August*, his son Arcadius, only six years of age. He paid his humble homage to the emperor, but took no notice of the young prince, who sat beside his father. Theodosius,

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taking this omission of St. Amphilocus for an oversight, had him reminded of it. The prelate then approached with a familiar air: "Ah! good day, my little friend," said he to the young prince, chucking him under the chin, and caressing him as he would any ordinary child. The emperor, very indignant, ordered the old man to be removed. The holy bishop, turning then to Theodosius, and assuming a look and tone of great dignity, said: "Your Majesty cannot bear that any indignity should be offered to your son, who is but a child; thinkest thou, then, that the Father of the Word made Flesh sees with less indignation any one refusing to the adorable person of His Son the same honors that are paid to Himself?" Theodosius admired the holy ingenuity of Amphilocus, made him draw near, and granted him all he desired. —TILLEMONT, *Hist. Eccles.*, VI., 628.

93. *Death of St. Michael, the Archangel.*—There are two natures in Jesus Christ, the divine nature and the human nature. A Greek heretic of the fifth century, named Eutyches, dared to maintain that there was but one, which was the divine nature; so that, according to him, Jesus Christ would have suffered as God, which is absurd and impossible. I remember having read that a prince of the Saracens, who was called Alamondar, and lived about that time, had the happiness of becoming a Christian. He was a famous warrior, whose very name made Syria and Phenicia tremble. The patriarch of Antioch, named Severus, who had the misfortune of professing the Eutychien

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heresy, endeavored to gain him over, and sent two of his prelates to indoctrinate him. The Saracen, having heard what they had to say, told them to return on the morrow. During this second interview, an officer to whom he had previously given the word, came and whispered something in his ear. Immediately the prince became sad; his eyes were moist with tears, and he appeared very sorrowful. "What is the matter, my lord?" anxiously inquired the two bishops who were conversing with him. "Alas! I have heard evil tidings! Only think, St. Michael the Archangel has just died, and the angels of heaven are all in great tribulation." The prelates, unable to repress a smile, hastened to re-assure him by telling him that the angels are immortal, and can neither suffer nor die. "And you would have me believe that though Jesus Christ has only the divine nature, He is dead. Can God, then, die?" At this rebuff, which they little expected, the two heretics lost no time in taking leave of a prince who had so much good sense.

94. *The Twelve Choir-Boys, Martyrs.*—If you read the history of the Arians, who dared to deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, you would see, my dear children, all the atrocities they committed in regard to Catholics. But you would likewise see there the firmness with which the faithful endured the most cruel torments, rather than apostatize. I have read a pretty story about that, which will particularly interest those who have the happiness of being choir-boys.

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When Hunneric, king of the Vandals, persecuted the Catholics, he sent into exile all those who refused to abjure their faith. Amongst these were twelve boys, who served in the church of Carthage, and were distinguished by their fine voices, but still more by their piety. They wanted to keep them to assist in the ceremonies of the Arians, and promised them everything they could wish, on condition that they became heretics. Admire their constancy, my young friends, not one of them would listen to such a proposal. They brought them back by force—they loaded them with caresses, and when all failed, they beat them with sticks. All was in vain, those twelve choir-boys remained faithful to their religion and their God. Hence, when the persecution had ceased, they were respected as real martyrs, and were called *the twelve apostles*. They went to reside in one house, and lived long together, giving to all around them an example of piety and virtue.—Victor De Vite, *Hist. de la Persec. des Vandales.*

95. *The Miracle of Typasus.*—The Vandals, a people of Africa, were Arians, that is to say, they denied the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In 484, their king, named Hunneric, a cruel and barbarous prince, had caused a heretic bishop to be elected for the city of Typasus, in Mauritania (now in Algeria). The inhabitants, who were Catholics, would not recognize him; the greater part of them chose rather to expatriate themselves into Spain. The king, furious at this resistance, had three hundred who re-

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mained behind, seized, and commanded them to say *Jesus Christ is not God*, under pain of having their right hands and their tongues cut off in the public square at Typasus. Not one would consent to this impiety; they preferred to undergo the punishment wherewith they were threatened. But see, children, the power of God, when their tongues were cut out, they continued to speak as before, and delighted to repeat every moment—"Jesus Christ is God! Jesus Christ is truly God!" The authors who relate this prodigy add that several of these generous confessors journeyed through divers countries, and went to Constantinople, where the Emperor Justinian himself saw and spoke with them.—VICTOR DE VITE'S *History of the Persecution of the Vandals*, Book V., Chapter 6.

96. *Power of the Name of Jesus.*—I think I have already told you something of the cruelties which the Arian Vandals exercised on those who would not deny, like them, the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amongst those who distinguished themselves by their courageous resistance, figures Count Armogastes, who was the son of Genseric, being of the Vandals. As he would never embrace the Arian heresy, he was bound hand and foot with cords, and thus left in prison. Armogastes had only to pronounce with faith the name of JESUS, and immediately all his bonds fell off, as though they had been but spider's web. He was then hung from a stake with his head down. Amazing prodigy! scarcely had they

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left him to himself, when he pronounced the Catholic words, "*Jesus Christ is God*," and fell into a peaceful slumber, without giving the least sign of suffering; it seemed as though he lay on a bed of rest. Such was in him the efficacy of the name of JESUS. And so shall it be with us, my young friends, if we pronounce that sacred name with all the faith and piety of which we are capable, as St. Paul assures us that at that name alone every knee must bend in heaven, on earth, and in hell.—VICTOR DE VITE, *Hist. Pers. des Vandales.*

97. *The Ingot of Gold and the Piece of Iron.*—How happy you are, my dear children, in knowing your Catechism! A child who knows his religion well may puzzle learned men who do not know it. There were, in the last century, at Aleppo, a large city of Turkey, in Asia, certain missionaries who converted many people. Amongst their Christians was a young lad of fifteen years, who, in company, once attracted much attention, by his ready wit. An Armenian priest, who had the misfortune of being a heretic, would have him admit that there is but one nature in Jesus Christ. "I know well," said he "that Jesus Christ is both God and man; but the divine nature and the human nature are so perfectly united, that they make but one. Take," said the heretic priest, "a large and a small piece of iron, fuse them together; they will make but one and the same piece, wherein you can no longer discern what made part of the little or what of the big." "That is true," said the lad,

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"but, instead of the little piece of iron, take a small ingot of gold, and fuse it with the iron. Will the piece you thus obtain be all gold, or yet all iron? Will you not find it part gold, part iron? So it is in Our Divine Lord; the divine nature, represented by that ingot of gold, is united to the human nature; they make, indeed, but one single person, but in that person we still find the two natures. It was in His human nature that Jesus Christ suffered and died, and it was by His divine nature that He gave an infinite value to His sufferings and death." To this admirable reasoning the heretic could answer nothing; he soon beat a retreat, growling against the youth, and the missionaries who had so well instructed him. FILASSIER, *Dictionnaire d'Education*, II., 445.

98. *The Plague of Marseilles and the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*—The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is entirely French; it dates from the close of the seventeenth century, but it is especially since the famous plague of Marseilles that it spread through the provinces. In the month of May, 1722, this plague, which had been supposed quite extinct, broke out again in that city, and threw it into the greatest consternation. The Heart of Jesus, which had already protected it once, was again the happy resource of the Bishop, the celebrated Belzunce. At his solicitation, the magistrates, in a body, made a vow to go every year, in the name of the city, to the Church of the Visitation, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, there to honor that worthy object of our love, to receive Holy

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Communion, to offer a white waxen taper four pounds in weight, adorned with the arms of the city, and, finally, to assist in the general procession which that prelate proposed to establish in perpetuity on that same day. This vow was pronounced publicly before the altar of the Cathedral Church, by the first of the municipal magistrates, in the name of all, on the day of the Fete-Dieu, before the procession of the Blessed Sacrament. The Bishop held the Sacred Host in his hands, and the magistrates knelt before him. All the people united in a vow from which they expected such happy results. It was heard in a manner that excited the admiration as well as the gratitude of all Marseilles. That very day all the sick were cured, and no one was ever after attacked by the plague. Fear, which in those fatal plagues does often more injury than the malady itself, gave place to entire confidence; the inhabitants of Marseilles believed themselves safe in the protection of the merciful heart of the Saviour. The disease died out so completely, that, six weeks after, the Bishop of Marseilles, in a pastoral which he wrote exciting the people to gratitude, said to them: "We now enjoy such perfect health, that we have not had for some time in Marseilles either deaths or diseases of any kind, a thing wholly unprecedented in a city so large and populous, and which goes to prove the miracle." It was in remembrance of this second favor, which appeared still more sudden and miraculous than the first, that the Bishop of Marseilles es-

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tablished in perpetuity a general procession on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. All these facts are established by the pastorals of that prelate, and by the official deliberations of the municipal body of Marseilles. The procession was interrupted for some time by the revolution; but it now takes place again with as much faith and piety as in the eighteenth century.—DEBUSSI, *Near Mouth of Mary*, 316.

99. *The Crucifix of the Tuileries in* 1848.—There happened something very remarkable, children, during the Revolution of 1848, at a time when there seemed to be but little disposition to protect what belongs to religion. It was on the 24th of February. The people came to invade the Tuileries, whence King Louis Philippe had gone but a few moments before. They flung from the windows the furniture, hangings and carpets. One young man, whose name I am sorry I do not know, ran in all haste to the palace-chapel, where the noonday Mass was just being said; he feared that it might be sacked, and wished to protect it. It had already undergone some disarrangement; some of the sacerdotal vestments were seen lying scattered in the sacristy; but no one had yet touched the altar. The young Catholic then asked some of the National Guardsmen to help him to remove the sacred vessels and the crucifix. "We will do it willingly," said they, "but on condition that we have with us a pupil of the Polytechnic School." Two of these immediately present themselves; they take the sacred vessels and

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the crucifix, and set out on their march for the Church of St. Roch. On the way there were some ill-disposed persons who began to scoff and hoot. The young man who carries the crucifix stops, he holds it up, shows it to the surrounding crowd, and cries out: "Citizens, you would be regenerated; well! remember you can only be so through Jesus Christ." At these words many voices from the crowd cry out: "Yes, yes, it is true! *Vive le Christ! Vive le Christ*," (which may be interpreted "Christ for ever!") and respectfully baring their heads, they marched in procession to the Church of St. Roch, where the priest took the crucifix, placed it on the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and gave his blessing to the people.—*L'Univers*, 28th February, 1848.

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CHAPTER V.

THIRD ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.

I.—CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST.

100. *The Child Raised to Life by Eliseus.*—I know not, children, whether you may have reflected on it, but it seems to me that there is something more extraordinary in the mystery of the Incarnation than in any of the others. A God to make Himself man, that he might be able to suffer and to die, in order to redeem the world, is something very strange, but it tends to give us an idea of the love and mercy of God for men. We find a beautiful figure of this in the life of the prophet Eliseus. One day, a poor Sunamite woman sent him word that her son, the only child she had, had died. Eliseus gives his stick to his disciple, and says to him: "Go to that woman's house and lay my stick on the body of her child, that he may return to life." But neither the stick nor the servant could work that miracle. Eliseus goes himself, and here it is, children, that the story applies to our subject: The prophet enters the chamber of the

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dead child, recollects himself a moment, calls God to his assistance, then stretching himself at full length over the corpse, he gathers himself up, as it were, to take the exact size of the child, so as to have his eyes on his eyes, his hands on his hands, his mouth on his mouth, his feet on his feet, and his heart on his heart. After a few moments, life had, as it were, passed from the body of Eliseus to that of the dead, and restored his existence. This is precisely what was done by Our Lord Jesus Christ. We were dead by sin, and he restored us to life by uniting his divine nature to ours.—*IV. Kings*, IV.

101. *The Holy-House of Nazareth.*—The Most Holy Virgin dwelt in Nazareth when the Archangel Gabriel came to announce to her, on the part of God, that she should be the mother of the Messiah promised and expected for more than four thousand years. The house which she then inhabited is no longer in that little town; it was miraculously conveyed to Loretto, a pretty little town of Italy, in the year 1294, as is proved by the most authentic traditions. The place in Nazareth, whereon that so venerable house once stood, is now inclosed within the limits of the Franciscan Convent. It is reached from the interior of the church by a flight of seventeen marble steps; one finds themselves then in a subterraneous chapel, lit night and day by several lamps. An altar has been raised on the spot whereon the mystery of the Incarnation was wrought. Close by are two granite pillars, one of which marks the spot

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where stood the Angel of the Lord when he said to the Blessed Virgin—"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee!" But, my young friends, the most interesting part of this subterraneous sanctuary is the centre of the marble pavement, whereon is inscribed, in large letters, those Latin words which you all know by heart:

VERBUM CARO HIC FACTUM EST.

Here the Word was made flesh.

Let us thank Our Lord, dear children, for the favor He did us in coming into the world; and when we assist at Mass on the day of the Annunciation, let us imagine that we are prostrate on the pavement in Nazareth, reading those words of the *Angelus:* "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt with us!"—Mgr. Leflin, *Holy Places*, III., 392.

102. *A Rock that Rolls Miraculously.*—You remember, children, the story of that pagan sacrificer to whom St. Gregory Thaumaturgus gave a note to bring back the devil into a temple, whence he had been expelled by the sign of the Cross (No. 76 of this series)? That sacrificer, touched by the miracle, was converted, and besought St. Gregory to instruct him himself. The holy bishop, as you may well believe, faithfully discharged this duty, and naturally commenced with the principal mysteries. Having explained that of the Holy Trinity, he came to that of the Incarnation, when he said that the Son, the Second Divine Person, had compassion on the world,

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lost by the sin of Adam, that He came down on earth, and took a body and soul like to ours, to the end that He might be able to suffer and die for us. "Impossible!" cried the pagan priest, "impossible! I cannot understand that!" "But, my friend," replied the Saint, "I do not understand it myself, for it is a mystery; I believe it, nevertheless, because such truths as these are not demonstrated by reasoning, but by the miracles of God's omnipotence." "Well, since that is the case, I will believe you, if you can, by a word, make this rock which is here beside us, go and place itself yonder on the opposite side of the stream." St. Gregory raises his eyes to Heaven, addresses to God a short but fervent prayer, and cries: "*Rock, betake thyself thither!*" Instantly, the huge stone rolled of itself to the spot indicated. This ended the dispute, the incredulous sacrificer found nothing difficult to believe, after that, in the sublime mysteries of religion, and became sincerely converted—St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus.*

II.—BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

103. *The Stable of Bethlehem.*—How happy would you not be, my dear children, to be able to visit the stable wherein Our Lord Jesus Christ was born! The grotto of Bethlehem to which the blessed Virgin and St. Joseph retired still exists; it has been inclosed within the precincts of the vast Church of the Nativity. You descend to it by a flight of sixteen

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steps. It is a natural cavern, part of which has been covered with masonry, and subsequently, the vault and ceiling coated with marble, by the piety of the faithful. The pavement is itself composed of white marble, with incrustations in jasper and porphyry. In the centre is seen a silver star, laid in 1717, on which has been inscribed in Latin these words, at once so simple and so touching:

ON THIS VERY SPOT JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

Oh! my young friends, what an impression should the reading of these two lines make on a Catholic heart! Emperors, kings, patriarchs, thousands of travellers have read them, and were so struck with awe that they fell prostrate on the floor and adored Him who was born on that spot for our salvation. Many sovereigns desired to leave in the grotto of Bethlehem a perpetual mark of their faith and piety; hence there are as many as thirty-two lamps continually burning there, which were given by the Republic of Venice, Emperors of Austria, Kings of Spain and Naples, and finally by the pious King Louis XIII. of France.—MGR. MISLIN, *Les Saints Lieux*, III., 12 et 18.

104. *The Virgin's Tree.*—Forty days after His birth, Jesus Christ was brought to the temple of Jerusalem, according to the law of Moses. There exists, children, in connection with that event, a touching tradition brought back by most pilgrims who

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have visited the neighborhood of Bethlehem. The Blessed Virgin, bearing the Divine Child in her arms, feeling herself fatigued, sat down to rest under a turpentine-tree, nigh midway between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Beside her was St. Joseph, holding in his hands two white doves, which were to be offered to the Lord in the temple. Whilst they sat in that place, the tree bent its branches, and spread them so as to protect the Holy Family and do homage to the Child Jesus. This miraculous tree existed for many long ages, and every pilgrim who passed that way kissed it respectfully, taking away with them some of its leaves or branches. It was unhappily destroyed in 1645; a Mahometan Arab cut it down in order to prevent the pious pilgrims from passing over his field. The pacha of Jerusalem being apprised of this by the Fathers of the Holy Land, gave orders that young shoots should be engrafted on the roots of the old tree; but it was useless. The monks sold the wood in small pieces and made of it crosses and beads which they distributed amongst travellers. They likewise caused a cairn, or heap of stones, to be erected on the spot where the Virgin's tree had stood.—Mgr. Mislin, *Les Saints Lieux*, III., 2.

105. *Death of the Impious Nestorius.*—The Most Holy Virgin is the Mother of Jesus Christ, since she really brought Him into the world; but, since Jesus Christ is God, it follows that, in one sense, Mary is truly Mother of God. Such has always been the belief of the Church. The first heretic who dared to

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refuse that glorious title to the Blessed Virgin was Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, who lived in the fifth century. The whole Catholic world was indignant at such audacity, and it was to protest against that heresy that the General Council of 431 was held at Ephesus. The entire population of the city and its environs repaired with incredible faith and fervor to the great square adjoining the church wherein the council was held. And there they remained during the entire day, so impatient were they to see the issue of the assembly. When the news was at length spread, towards evening, that the heretic Nestorius was condemned and anathematized, and that the doctrine of the Church was still that Mary is truly Mother of God, the enthusiasm of the people was beyond all description. Each one cried out repeatedly: "*Mary is truly the Mother of God! Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us!*" It being already night, the men lit torches, and escorted the bishops to their several lodgings; the women preceded this triumphal cortege, scattering perfumes along the streets; in a word, the whole city of Ephesus testified the greatest joy, and the most fervent devotion for the Blessed Virgin.—TILLEMONT, *Hist. Eccles.*, XIV., 400.

106. *Midnight Mass in the Woods.*—Religion has many touching solemnities, my dear children, but there are few, I think, so much so as the midnight Mass. I have read something very curious about that in the life of St. Francis of Assisium. He had so much devotion for the mystery of the Birth of

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Christ, that he rose daily at midnight, in order to adore Our Lord at the hour when he made His first appearance in the world. Subsequently, he came to do something still more extraordinary. He asked and received from Pope Honorius III. permission to have midnight Mass sung on Christmas night, in the midst of a forest which was near the Monastery of Grecio. He commenced by arranging, with his monks, a sort of stable or rustic cave, with rocks, moss, and branches of trees; then they put up a manger, with a rack, and the other accessories to a stable. Finally, in order to complete the representation of the holy places, they scattered straw over the floor of the stable, and brought thither an ox and an ass. It was in this rude edifice that an altar was afterwards erected and midnight Mass said. A vast concourse of people crowded to the place, bearing torches, and making the forest resound all night long, with their pious hymns and prayers. I am sure, my little friends, you would be all well pleased to assist at a Mass of this kind; but that should not prevent you from recalling the humiliations of the little Jesus on the day of His birth.—Pere Chalippe, *Life of St. Francis of Assissium*, 166.

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CHAPTER VI.

FOURTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.

I.—SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE.

107. *St. Palemon's Oil.*—Meditation on the sufferings of Our Lord have always been of great assistance to the Saints in sanctifying themselves. I have read one instance of the kind which some of you may probably know, my little friends; it is taken from the life of St. Pacomius, who died about the year 348. One Easter day, the holy old man Palemon, whose disciple he was, said to him: "Since this festival is common to all Christians, make us ready something to eat." Pacomius, hastening to obey, took, contrary to his usual custom, a little oil, to which he added some salt, and a few herbs. Then he called St. Palemon: "Father," said he, "I have done what you commanded me to do." The holy old man, after saying the usual prayer, approached the table, and seeing the oil, he said, raising his hand to his forehead and shedding a torrent of tears: "My Master was crucified, and I would now eat oil!

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no, I will not do it." So, notwithstanding all the entreaties of Pacomius, he would not taste it; but, taking some bread and salt, according to their custom, they sat down to table, and after Palemon had, as usual, pronounced the blessing and made the sign of the cross, they both eat and humbly returned thanks to God. These were men who meditated with fruit on the Passion of Our Lord.—Michel-Ange Marin, *Vie des Peres des deserts.*

108. *The Three Pictures of a Chapel.*—A German book, printed at Augsburg, in Bavaria, in 1841, relates the following story, closely connected with the Passion of Our Lord. A valiant knight, named Hildebrand, had been grossly insulted by Bruno, one of his companions in arms. He swore to take a terrible revenge, made his preparations long beforehand, and finally appointed the day and place which appeared to him the most suitable for the execution of his dread design. He arose by night, and repaired alone and well armed to a solitary spot, which he knew the knight Bruno was to pass. On the way, he found a little chapel open; he went in to await the dawn of day, and amused himself by looking at the paintings by the light of the sanctuary lamp. There were three pictures. The first represented the Saviour covered with the scarlet cloak and crowned with thorns; underneath was written in Latin: "*He returned not insult for insult.*" The second picture recalled the sad scene of the scourging, and bore these words: "*When He suffered thus, He threatened not.*" The last repre-

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sented Jesus on the cross, with these words: "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" The successive sight of these three paintings touched the heart of Hildebrand; he fell on his knees and began to pray. By degrees his hatred vanished. He still awaited his enemy, but it was to forgive him from the bottom of his heart and be sincerely reconciled to him.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 225.

109. *The Holy Crown of Thorns at Paris.*—Perhaps you are not aware, my dear children, that Our Lord's sacred Crown of Thorns is still preserved in Paris; I have had myself the happiness of seeing and kissing it. This is how it came there: Baldwin the Second, Emperor of Constantinople, having come to France to solicit the king's aid against the Greeks, who were besieging that imperial city, thought he would gain the heart of King Louis by making him a present of the Holy Crown of Thorns. He was not mistaken; the king assisted with money and troops, the precious relic was withdrawn from the hands of the Venetians,—to whom the Greeks had given it in pawn,—and was brought to France. St. Louis went to receive it, five leagues from Sens, followed by his whole court and all his clergy; he accompanied it to Paris, with sentiments of compunction and humility, whereof his whole exterior presented sensible marks. Assisted by his brother, the Count d'Artois, both being barefoot, with heads uncovered, he himself bore the Holy Crown from the Church of St. Antoine-des-Champs, in one of the suburbs of Paris, to that of

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Notre Dame; it was afterwards deposited in the Chapel of St. Nicholas, attached to his palace. Having also received a fragment of the true cross, which the Venetians had obtained from the King of Jerusalem, he caused the Chapel of St. Nicholas to be taken down, and built in the same place the Holy Chapel (*la Sainte Chapelle*). He there placed the pious relics of the Redeemer's Passion, enshrined in gold and precious stones; he founded canons to sing the praises of God day and night in presence of these venerable remains, and had a particular devotion for the place. Every year, on Good Friday, he went thither, clad in his royal robes, the crown on his head, and exposed with his own hands the True Cross to the veneration of the people.—BAILLET, *Vie des Saints*, 25th August.

110. *The Wounds of Our Lord.*—It is related in the chronicles of the Order of St. Francis that a man who was very rich and had been bred up in all the delicacies of the world became a religious in that Order. The demon, vexed at this change of life, and determined to oppose it with all his might, began to torment him, continually representing to him the austerity of the community into which he had entered. For, instead of the delicate table, splendid dress, magnificent furniture, and all the luxuries he had in the world, he found in religion only some badly-cooked vegetables, a rough tunic, a little straw to lie on; in a word, great poverty in all things. The devil made all these privations still

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harder to bear by bringing them incessantly before his eyes and soliciting him to leave them and return to the world. At last the temptation became so strong that the poor man resolved to leave the monastery. In doing so he had to pass through the chapter-room; there, kneeling before a crucifix, and having commended himself to God with much fervor, he was ravished in spirit: Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, and asked him why he was going away. He answered with much respect that, having been delicately nurtured in the world, he could not bear the great austerities of religion. The Saviour then raising his right arm, said, showing him the wound in his side: "Put your hand hither, and dip it in the blood that flows from this wound, and as often as the austerities and pains you have to endure shall present themselves to your mind, refresh it with this blood, and the most painful things shall appear sweet and easy to you." The novice being returned from his ecstasy did as the Lord had commanded him. At each temptation of sensuality and impatience wherewith he was assailed, he recalled to his mind the Saviour's Passion, and immediately the bitterness of mortification was converted into sweetness. Let us employ the same means, my dear young friends! when we suffer, let us think of Jesus Christ suffering, let us contemplate our Crucifix and we shall be comforted.—RODRIGUEZ, *Christian Perfection*, III., 133.

111. *The Mirror of a Holy Priest.*—Our Lord's

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face is often painted such as it was in His Passion. The head is crowned with thorns, the forehead and cheeks are covered with dust and drops of blood, the eyes dim with tears. This is the figure which is called the *Ecce Homo*. That word, by the way, recalls to my mind a very curious story. A priest of Florence, in Italy, named Hippolito Galleatani, had a fine *Ecce Homo* painted, and magnificently framed to place in his chamber. Every day he went to contemplate it during his meditation, and always found in it numerous subjects for reflection. Opposite his window, on the other side of the street, dwelt a lady who unhappily lived but for the world, and spent whole hours decorating herself before a mirror. Having several times remarked the pious ecclesiastic before his *Ecce Homo*, she took it into her head that that picture was a very large glass, in which he used to admire himself. She went to pay him a visit, and spoke of his handsome mirror. Galleatani left her to believe that it really was a glass; he much extolled its beauty, and told her it even enjoyed a property which all mirrors have not. "You know, madam, ordinary mirrors reflect our faces just as they are, but mine has the curious property of effacing by degrees the spots, defects and imperfections which one may have, provided they contemplate it every day." The lady, more and more bewildered, asked to see this extraordinary mirror. Galleatani continued the conversation a little longer, then conducted her to the famous mirror. Imagine the astonishment of

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that worldly lady. The good priest then made her so sensible that all he had said was true—not for the face, which the slightest accident may disfigure, but for the soul, that she changed her sentiments, led a most Christian life, and died a holy and a happy death.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 228.

II.—WAS CRUCIFIED.

112. *The Crucifix is a Book.*—I remember having read, under this title, a beautiful story in *Christian Perfection;* it relates to St. Bonaventure. At the time when he was in great repute, teaching theology in Paris, and attracting general esteem and admiration by his works, St. Thomas Aquinas went one day to see him, and requested him to show him what books he used for his studies. Then St. Bonaventure, conducting him to his little chamber, showed him some very common books that were on his table. But St. Thomas gave him to understand that he desired to see the other books from which he derived so many marvellous things. The Saint then showed him a small oratory, with nothing in it but a crucifix: "There, Father," said he, "is all my other books; this is the principal one from which I draw all I teach, and all I write. Yes, it is by throwing myself at the foot of that crucifix, and begging of Him whose image it bears, the enlightenment of my doubts, and assisting at Mass, that I have made more progress in the sciences, and have gained more true

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lights than I should have done by the reading of any books whatsoever." Well! my young friends, you did not suspect this, that whilst men study much and know but little, the Saints content themselves with their crucifix, and attain to the most sublime genius! —Rodriguez, *Christian Perfection*, III., 189.

113. *The Red Crosses of Louis XII.*—Those amongst you, my young friends, who have studied the history of France, are aware that Louis XII. succeeded Charles VIII. in 1498. When he was consecrated at Reims, he had a list prepared for him of all his enemies, especially those who had been opposed to him when he was only Duke of Orleans. In going through this list, he marked with a red cross a certain number of those names, and particularly of those lords of whom we have just spoken. Those who had had the misfortune of displeasing him were much alarmed on learning that they had been thus marked in red; they doubted not but that they were soon to perish, and endeavored to escape from the court, some by one way, some by another. The king, apprised of the motive of their retreat, could not help laughing, and called them all back. Their fears increased still more, but Louis XII. said to them: "I am surprised, my lords, at your precipitate flight, and the reasons you assign for it. I never intended to do you harm; the King of France has nought to do with the private quarrels of the Duke of Orleans. Furthermore, the red cross which I have placed at each of your names, very far from exciting me to

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revenge, moves me, on the contrary, to clemency. Yes, I am bound to forgive you whatever wrongs you may have done me, as Christ on the cross asked pardon of His Father for those who had crucified Him." There, my dear children, is what we may call speaking and acting as a Christian.—GABOURD, *Historie de la France*, X.

114. *The Ruffian in Presence of a Crucifix.*—Speaking of Our Lord dead on the Cross for our sins, I remember a story of a crucifix which I will tell you with pleasure. A missionary had gone to a prison in Turin, or some other Italian city, to prepare a criminal who was under sentence of death. He found him kneeling on the floor of his cell, a crucifix in his hand, crying and sobbing to such a degree that the zealous minister of Christ, do what he would, could not console him. At length, however, restraining his tears by a great effort, the unhappy man turned towards the missionary, and said: "Perhaps you think, Father, that I weep because of the death and torment that await me, but that is not the cause of my trouble. I weep because for forty years I have been the inveterate enemy of this crucifix, and now I find nothing else but it to keep me company. Forty years have I turned my back on the crucifix to run after friends who have been the cause of the crimes for which I die to-morrow, and now they have all abandoned me; for fear of being set down as my accomplices, they all pretend not to know me. I am deserted by my kindred, who are

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ashamed of being connected with a malefactor; in short, I have none now to comfort me but Jesus Christ, He whom I have done nothing but offend all my lifetime." He died in these sentiments, furnishing yet another proof that the very sight of the crucifix can change a villain into a just and righteous man.—Dubussi, *Nouveau Mois de Marie*, 65.

115. *All is Safe When We Look at the Cross.*—Perhaps, children, you already know the following story; nevertheless, I will tell it to you now, because it is so full of interest: A young lady of distinguished birth, but whose name I forget, desired to enter a very austere order. To try her vocation, the Superior gave her a frightful picture of the rigors of the cloister, and conducting her in spirit to every place in the community, she everywhere showed her objects repulsive to nature. The young postulant appeared shaken; it seemed as though her resolution was giving way. She remained silent. "Daughter," said the Superior, "you do not answer me." "Reverend Mother," replied the young lady, "I have but one question to propose to you: Are there any crucifixes in your house? Shall I find a crucifix in that narrow cell, with the hard bed of which you speak? in that refectory, where the food is so coarse and unpalatable? in that chapter, where one is so harshly reprimanded?" "Oh! yes, daughter, there are crucifixes everywhere." "Well, Mother, I hope I shall find nothing difficult, since I shall have a crucifix

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near me wherever I am, and whatever I may have to suffer."—DEBUSSI, *Nouveau Mois de Marie*, 263.

116. *Gustavus and His Crucifix.*—A youth who was endowed with an excellent disposition, and whose mildness and amiability endeared him to all who knew him, was sent by his parents to a house of education, in order to perfect himself in the different branches which his condition required. He had been scarcely six months in this establishment, when he was suddenly taken ill, and his malady declared itself with the most alarming symptoms. The parents are promptly apprised of his danger; they set out immediately, and the father, arriving first, hastens at once to visit his son. Alas! he finds him in a desperate condition, almost at his last hour, it would seem, and scarcely able to recognize him. Having remained with him some time, he left him, overwhelmed with grief, saying, with tears in his eyes: "To-morrow, my son, I will see you again." When to-morrow came his son was no more! It was a hard task to break the news to him, and to the poor mother, who had just arrived, and asked to be taken to her son's bedside. Two priests were charged with this painful office. After having prepared the minds of the parents as well as time would permit—"Madam," said they, "you must make an act of submission to the Divine will." "My God!" cries the mother, "I understand you—Gustavus is dead. Alas! alas! my dear Gustavus!" "Madam," said the ministers of the Lord, who knew her faith, "we for-

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got to tell you that you have still one source of consolation—Gustavus' crucifix!" "Oh! my dear son's crucifix! Oh, give it, give it to me!" It was brought accordingly. As soon as she had it in her possession, she pressed it to her heart, then to her lips, and watered it with her tears. Suddenly she felt herself consoled, and the violence of her grief assuaged. "This," said she, "shall be henceforth the sole object of my love; nothing can ever more attach me to this earth, but this sacred image shall replace my son; it will be my all in this world!"—*Recompenses hebdomadaires*, XXX., 5.

III.—DEAD AND BURIED.

117. *Finding of the Holy Cross.*—When the Emperor Constantine became a Christian, his pious mother, St. Helena, although nearly eighty years of age, undertook a journey to Jerusalem, to honor, in a fitting manner, the places sanctified by the Passion of Our Lord. She went direct to Calvary, where Christ died. Her heart was oppressed with sorrow on seeing the abominable profanations which the pagans had committed there, in order to lessen, if not entirely to efface, the veneration of the place by Christians. The place of Our Lord's sepulture had been so changed and disfigured that the faithful themselves could no longer recognize it. But, following the directions of an aged Jew, St. Helena caused the statues of the false gods to be thrown down, the Temple of Venus

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razed to the ground, and enormous quantities of rock and clay, which had been piled on the natural soil to a great height, to be cleared away. Thus it was that the Holy Sepulchre was at length discovered; in the course of their excavations, the workmen came in due time to three crosses nearly alike—that of Jesus Christ and those of the two thieves. As it was not easy to distinguish them one from the other, St. Macarius, patriarch of Jerusalem, had them all three touched by a sick person, whom the doctors had given up. Nothing came of touching the two first, but the first touch of the third immediately restored the dying person to health. By this means they ascertained that the cross was really that of Our Lord.—Filassier, *Dictionnaire d'Education*, II., 373.

118. *St. John Gualbert Disarmed at Sight of the Cross.*—We should always have about us, my dear children, a crucifix, or small cross; the very sight of it would often restrain us from evil. *Apropos* to Good Friday, here is a fact that will prove it: John Gualbert, a young Italian gentleman, burned to avenge the death of his brother, who had been basely murdered. His father urged him on still more by frequent exhortations. In this frame of mind he chanced to meet the murderer, a neighboring gentleman, The lonely place, the narrow road, all favored his design; he raises his arm to strike his enemy. The unfortunate man, being wholly unarmed, falls on his knees. his arms crossed, without saying a single word; it was Good Friday. Reminded by that simple act, of

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the Saviour's death, John Gualbert throws away his sword, raises his enemy, and mildly says: "I cannot refuse you what you ask of me in the name of Jesus Christ; I not only grant you your life, but forgive you from my heart. Pray to God that He may forgive me my sin!" And he embraced him tenderly. After this victory obtained over his own heart, he enters a church, prostrates himself at the foot of the crucifix, and God makes known to him, by a prodigy, how pleasing to Him was that act of sublime charity. Subsequently John Gualbert entered a religious order, and became a Saint, whom the Church honors on the 12th of July.—GODESCARD, *Vies des Saints*, 12th July.

119. *The Little Saint Crucified.*—You know, my dear children, that it was the Jews who crucified Our Lord; well! they were so blinded because of their deicide, that they sought several times to renew the awful scene in all its sad details. The Church honors on the 24th of March a St. Simon who was thus crucified in 1472. The Jews of the town of Trente assembled on Holy Tuesday in their synagogue, and formed the horrible project of crucifying a young Christian on the following Friday. One of their physicians undertook to provide the victim. On the following day, Wednesday, when most of the inhabitants were at the celebration of the Tenebræ, he took the opportunity of seizing a little child of three years old who was sitting on the threshold of a door, coaxed it to go with him, and brought it to his murderous co-religionists. The Jews commenced their

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atrocious ceremony on Thursday night, about midnight. They tied a handkerchief on the mouth of the little Simon, cut him in several places and caught his blood in a basin. They held the poor child stretched on a table with his arms extended in the form of a cross. After piercing his whole body with awls and bodkins, as it were to represent the scourging and crowning with thorns, they had the bloody satisfaction of seeing him expire in their hands. They then began to dance around the little corpse, shouting like savages—"That is how we treated Jesus, the God of the Christians!" These wretches failed not to be discovered, and were condemned to undergo the supreme penalty of the law in punishment of their atrocious crime. As I told you a little while ago, this innocent victim has been deservedly placed amongst the Saints.—GODESCARD, *Vies des Saints*, March 24th.

120. *The Rocks of Calvary Rent Asunder.*—It is related in the Gospel, my young friends, that at the death of Christ, the rocks were rent asunder. That split is still to be seen, and the sight of it alone has sufficed to convert unbelievers. A learned English traveller relates an adventure of this kind which occurred to one of his countrymen. He was one of those professed free thinkers, who only admit as true what they see themselves, would have others believe them on their word, but yet refuse to believe any one. Travelling in Palestine, with a mind full of prejudice, he made a jest of everything he saw, and laughed im-

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moderately at stories he heard of relics and miracles. He was told of the fissures in the rock of Calvary, and must needs see them, promising himself additional themes for the exercise of his wit and pleasantry. But when he had regarded for some moments those enormous fissures, when he saw that instead of following the natural division of soils, as is usual in other convulsions of the earth, they followed, on the contrary, the most oblique directions; when he had considered all that, he was staggered, he began to believe in Religion, and even cried aloud in his conviction, "*I begin to be a Christian!* I have made a profound study of mathematics and physics, and I am satisfied that the rents I now see were not produced by an ordinary or natural earthquake. I see, on the contrary, that they are the pure effort of a miracle, and I thank my God for having brought me hither to contemplate this monument of His power, which proves in so striking a manner the Divinity of Jesus Christ."—Mgr. Mislin, *Les Saints Lieux*, II., 265.

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CHAPTER VII.

FIFTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

Descended into Hell, the third day arose from the Dead.

121. *Water Changed into Oil.*—The Resurrection of Our Lord has always been the greatest, or, at least, one of the greatest festivals of the Church. The first Christians passed in prayers and pious ceremonies the night of Holy Saturday till the auspicious dawn of Easter Day. It was on this occasion that a very extraordinary miracle once took place in Jerusalem. All were absorbed in their holy occupations, when the deacons suddenly perceived that the lamps were going out; the worst of it was that there was no oil in the sacristy wherewith to replenish them. They were about to be plunged in darkness. Every one was troubled and uneasy; the deacons, who had charge of the lamps, knew not what to do. It was only the patriarch, St. Narcissus, that took no heed of what was passing. When told of it, he contented himself with saying: "Bring me some water in a large basin." It was brought to him accordingly; he repeats some prayers, makes the sign of the Cross over it, and commands the deacons to pour some of

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it into the expiring lamps. Wonderful to relate, the water was changed into excellent oil. When daylight came, and the lamps were no longer needed, each one secured a little of this miraculous oil, some of which was still in preservation, more than an hundred years after, in the time of the historian Eusebius, of Cesarea, who relates this fact.—GODESCARD, *Vies des Saints*, 29th October.

122. *The Easter Alleluia.*—Have you observed, my dear children, how joyous the Church is on Easter Day? Her joy is translated, one may say, into every language; she repeats at every moment the words *Alleluia! Behold the day which the Lord hath made! Christ is risen!* St. Margaret, virgin and martyr, being interrogated by the judges on her religion, answered without hesitation, that she was a Christian. "What an absurdity! to adore a man who was nailed to an infamous gibbet!" "How do you know that that man was crucified!" demanded the courageous Christian." "We know it by your Gospels, which you regard as your sacred books." "It is true we regard the Gospels as our sacred books, but that same Gospel which tells us that Christ died on the cross tells us also that He rose again from the dead. By dying, He showed Himself man; by arising from the dead, He proved Himself God. Hence it is that we adore Him; hence it is that we sing with our whole hearts '*Alleluia! Alleluia!*' And hence it is, in fine, that we fear not to give our life for Him!" This bold confession of faith,

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supported by such logical reasoning, attracted general admiration; but the governor, ashamed of being overcome by a weak woman, made her undergo the most frightful torments; then, seeing that St. Margaret was nowise shaken, he caused her to be beheaded.—GODESCARD, *Vies des Saints*, 20th July.

123. *Earth from the Holy Sepulchre.*—The piety of the pilgrims, who, for more than eighteen hundred years, have visited the scenes of Our Lord's mortal life, goes often so far as to carry away some earth or to break off fragments of wood or stone, in those sacred places. St. Augustine himself relates a splendid miracle wrought in his time by a little of this dust taken from the tomb of Jesus Christ, and, consequently, from the place where He came forth glorious by His resurrection. A man of quality, named Hesperius, had the great affliction of seeing his house become a den of devils; things sufficient to make the hair of one's head stand on end, were of ordinary occurrence there, and all through the malice of Satan, who was, doubtless, enraged because he could not reckon Hesperius amongst his servants. One of his friends, who had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, gave him a little earth taken from the Holy Sepulchre; Hesperius placed it in one of his apartments, had Mass celebrated in it, and failed not to experience the efficacy of his prayers. This miracle was much talked of in the neighborhood; St. Augustine heard of it, and wished to see, with his own eyes, this bewitched house, as it was called. Hesperius begged

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the holy bishop to permit him to build a chapel in the place, which was granted. Scarcely was the edifice completed, when a paralytic young man, being brought thither, was immediately cured. This new miracle proved that God was well pleased with what had been done.—LASSAUSE, *Explication du Catechisme de l'Empire*, 94.

124. *A Battle Gained by an Alleluia.*—The word *Alleluia* is a cry of triumph; it denotes the victory which Our Lord gained over Death by His resurrection. We find in the life of St. Germain d'Auxerre the story of another victory gained by this same cry; it will interest you, I know, my young friends, so I will tell it to you. St. Germain, bishop of Auxerre, and St. Loup, bishop of Troyes, had gone to Great Britain, or England, to combat heresies that were disturbing the peace of the Church. Whilst they were there the inhabitants were attacked by the pagan Picts and Scotts. The Britons had recourse to the two Saints, and besought them to accompany their army, in order that the combat might be favorable to them. It being Easter time, St. Germain had a sort of chapel made in the midst of the camp, of branches of trees interlaced, and the Catechumens who had been prepared for Baptism were there solemnly baptised. After the festival the little army of Christians set forward on its journey, having at its head St. Germain, who had once been a brave and skilful military leader. He recommended his soldiers for the time being to observe the best possible order,

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and as soon as they saw the hostile army arrive, to repeat with all their strength the word they should hear him say. No sooner were the Picts and Scotts in sight, than the holy bishop began to cry out: *Alleluia*, and immediately his men repeated as loud as they could shout, *Alleluia! Alleluia!* The echoes of the mountains repeated the cry with a thundering sound. Nothing more was wanting to frighten the barbarians, who instantly fled in wild disorder; many of them were even drowned in their haste to cross the river. Thus did St. Germain gain the victory without the shedding of a drop of blood.—GODESCARD, *Vies des Saints*, 26th July.

125. *A Rival of Christ Risen.*—Of all the miracles wrought by Our Lord Jesus Christ, the most stupendous, the most difficult of all, if I may so express myself, is that of His own resurrection. Jesus Christ raises Himself; He is, therefore, God; there is no possibility of doubting it for a moment. Even the impious and unbelieving have had to admit that. The most curious story with which I am acquainted on this subject is that of the famous inventor of a new religion which he endeavored to substitute for Catholicity after the French Revolution of 1793. He was called La Reveillere-Lepeaux, and gave to his new religion the name of *Theophilanthropy*, that is to say, *love of God and men*. Notwithstanding the fine ideas suggested by this silly name, and the money spent profusely in buying over people to the new belief, the Theophilanthropists made no great

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progress. La Reveillere-Lepeaux complained, I believe, to Barras, one of the most famous revolutionaries of that dismal time, that his sectaries did not seem to increase in numbers, whereas the disciples of Jesus Christ were so faithful to their Master, who, nevertheless, imposed upon them only privations. "Well! as for me, I do not wonder," replied Barras laughing, "and I can give you a piece of good advice on this head." "What is that, citizen?" asked the new high-priest. "Here it is: have yourself killed on Friday, let them bury you on Saturday, try your best to rise on Sunday morning; and, take my word for it, people will immediately believe in your new religion." La Reveillere did not choose to follow this advice, as you may well suppose, and now both himself and his sect are quite forgotten.—Claudius Hebrard, *Journal des bons Exemples*, 5th year, 43.

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CHAPTER VIII.

SIXTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

Ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

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126. *The Taking Up of Elias.*—There is nothing in the Old Testament which more clearly typified the glorious Ascension of Our Lord into heaven, than the miraculous taking up of the prophet Elias. It took place in the reign of Joram, king of Israel, about 887 years before Christ. He had been apprised of the extraordinary favor which God meant to confer upon him, and desired, through humility, that no one might be a witness of it. But his disciple Eliseus would never consent to leave him for a moment during the little time he had yet to spend on earth. So it was, also, with fifty others of his disciples, called the sons of the prophets, who happened to be in the vicinity of the mountain at the appointed moment. Elias and Eliseus repaired together to the banks of the Jordan; the former divested himself of the cloak which he wore on his shoulders, folded it, and struck with it the waters of the river, which opened immediately a passage for the two prophets of the Lord.

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Arriving at the other side, Eliseus besought his master to leave him his double spirit, viz.: of prophecy and miracles, to which Elias, after some hesitation, consented. As they walked on together, talking of these things, there appeared before them a fiery chariot, with horses which likewise appeared of fire. Elias mounted this chariot, which stopped beside him, and was gradually raised through the air in the midst of a whirlwind. When he had reached a certain height, he let fall his cloak, which Eliseus took, and by its means wrought afterwards a great number of prodigies. He thereby understood that the spirit of Elias, his master, had descended upon him. Such is the way, my young friends, in which the Scripture relates the taking up of the holy prophet; he disappeared from the world, but is not dead, and will one day come down on earth, to die and be raised to life with the rest of mankind.—*IV. Book of Kings*, Chap. II.

127. *The Prints of Our Lord's Feet on the Mount of Olives.*—When Our Lord ascended into heaven, on Ascension Day, He left printed on the rocky surface of Mount Olivet the marks of His sacred feet. Here is what I have read on this subject in the Travels of Baron Geramb, who visited the Holy Land in 1833: "On the centre of the summit of the mountain, in a species of chapel, is seen in the rock the print made by Our Saviour's left foot, at the moment when He quitted the earth to ascend into heaven. It is confidently asserted that in former times the

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print of the right foot was likewise to be seen, but that it was taken away by the Turks to be placed in the Mosque of the Temple. As regards the print of the left foot, it exists in such a way as to leave no doubt whatever, although it is somewhat effaced by the kisses of the pilgrims of so many ages, and also, perhaps, by the pious thefts which even the strictest care could not always prevent. This part of the rock is now surrounded by masonry, and under charge of a Santon, a species of Turkish monk. This man is provided with small square stones, wherewith he touches the vestiges of Our Lord's foot, and afterwards presents to pilgrims in exchange for some trifling gratuity. Judging from the direction of this mark, Our Lord must have had His face turned towards the north when He ascended into heaven." Such, my dear children, is the account of the Baron de Geramb; all travellers have confirmed it, especially Mgr. de Mislin, who visited the Holy Places only a few years since.—MGR. MISLIN, *Les Saints Lieux*, II., 468.

128. *St. Stephen's Vision.*—Reciting the Creed, my dear friends, we say: *Ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.* Those words, *sitteth at the right hand*, signify that Jesus Christ, as man, occupies the first place in heaven, and that He is elevated above all creatures. We shall one day see Him when we go to keep Him company after our death; but there was a Saint who had that happiness, even during his life. This was Saint

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Stephen, the first deacon, and the first martyr. He was, says the Scripture, a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and who did great wonders and miracles amongst the people. The infatuated Jews, especially those of the Synagogue of Jerusalem, unable to withstand his wisdom and the power of his word, and yet unwilling to be converted by his preaching, stirred up the populace against him. They even went so far as to bribe persons to say that they had heard him blaspheme against Moses, and even against God himself. The high-priest had him brought before him. St. Stephen delivered, on that occasion, an admirable discourse, in which he proved to the Jews how fatally they were mistaken in refusing to recognize Jesus Christ for the Messiah. Instead of listening to his words, they foamed and gnashed their teeth with rage. Then it was that St. Stephen, raising his eyes to heaven, visibly beheld God in His glory, and Jesus standing at His right hand, as if to assist in the combat, and the victory of the holy martyr. He then cried out, in the hearing of all the crowd: *I see the heavens open, and the Son of Man at the right hand of God.* But the Jews, with loud shouts, closed their ears, rushed violently upon him, and, dragging him out of the city, stoned him to death, without any other form of trial. St. Stephen was the first who had the happiness of giving his life for the Gospel.—*Acts of the Apostles*, V. and following chapters.

129. *A Pilgrim at the Mount of Olives.*—*Apropos*

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to Our Lord's Ascension, I remember a very touching fact, related by St. Bernardine of Sienna, and again by St. Francis de Sales. In the time of the Crusades, a pious French gentleman, named Lethbald, born in the neighborhood of Autun, undertook, with many others, the Pilgrimage of the Holy Land. Scarcely had he landed there, when he hastened to Nazareth, where the Blessed Virgin had dwelt when the Angel Gabriel came to announce to her the mystery of the Incarnation. Thence he set out for Bethlehem, and visited with love and with faith the grotto in which Our Lord came into the world. He then visited in succession the other places sanctified by the presence of that Divine Saviour: the Jordan, where He was baptized by St. John; the desert, where for forty days He fasted and prayed; the sea of Galilee, near to which He wrought so many miracles. But he paused particularly at the scenes which recalled to his mind the sufferings and death of his good Master. He witnessed, in spirit, His agony in the Garden of Olives, His humiliation in the house of Caiaphas, His scourging and crowning with thorns in that of Pilate. He followed Him step by step on the way to Calvary, trying in the depth of his heart to aid Him in bearing His Cross. Arrived at the summit, he fell prostrate on the ground, half dead with sorrow. Having remained several hours absorbed in his pious meditations, he repaired to the Holy Sepulchre, then climbed the Mount of Olives, whence Our Lord ascended into heaven. "O my good Jesus!" he ex-

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claimed, "I have followed Thee on earth through all the places sanctified by Thy presence; I have seen all, from Thy cradle to Thy tomb; behold me now on the spot whence Thou didst ascend into heaven. Whither can I go, O Lord, if not after Thee to heaven? Ah! permit me to follow Thee to Paradise!" At these words he feels himself ill, is brought back to Jerusalem to the Convent of the Fathers of the Holy Land, and two days after he was in heaven.—DEVOUCOUX, *Legendaire d'Autun*, II., 216.

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CHAPTER IX.

SEVENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

From thence He shall come, to judge both the living and the dead.

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130. *Balthazar's Feast.*—Do you remember, my young friends, the story of Balthazar's feast, which you have read in your Sacred History? I know of nothing which more resembles the Last Judgment, or, at least, the terror with which the wicked shall be struck on that day. Balthazar, king of Babylon, gave a great banquet to a thousand of the principal lords of his court. In the intoxication of his impious joy, he insulted the God of Israel, and caused to be brought forth the sacred vases which his father had formerly taken from the Temple of Jerusalem, shamelessly making his officers and courtiers drink from them. All at once he stops, is silent, turns pale and trembles, his knees knock together. What, then, ails him? is he no longer the mighty king of Babylon? does he no longer see around him his faithful friends, the officers of his palace, the generals of his armies? Yes, but he perceives a hand gliding along the wall of the apartment and writing three Chaldean words:

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Mane, Thecel, Phares. No one could solve this enigma, till the Prophet Daniel was brought, and he explained its meaning frankly and courageously. "Prince," said he to the king, "your crimes have reached their height, and the hour of my God's vengeance is close at hand. His hand it is that has traced those words. *Mane* means that He hath counted your days, and the end is come; *Thecel* means that He hath weighed your actions in the balance of His justice, and you have been found wanting; *Phares* means that He hath divided your kingdom, and given it to the Medes and Persians." This terrible prediction was speedily fulfilled, for, that very night whilst Balthazar feasted his courtiers, Cyrus the Great took Babylon, and with one blow put an end to his kingdom, his life, and his impiety. A striking image this of what awaits us at the last Judgment: God will count over our days, weigh our actions, and treat us according to our deserts.—*Daniel*, Chap. V.

131. *A Solitary at the Tribunal of God.*—St. John Climachus, that pious doctor of the Church, who lived in the sixth century, relates that a solitary, named Stephen, having reached an extreme old age, fell ill, and appeared at the point of death. Some hours before he breathed his last, he appeared all at once, as it were, beside himself. He was seen to glance fearfully around on every side, like one who is surrounded by enemies. Then the spectators were witness of a strange sight; it seemed to them that

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the dying man was before a tribunal, and was answering accusations brought against him. They saw no one, but they heard distinctly what was said. "It is true," said the solitary, "that I did commit that sin, but if I did, I fasted three years for it on bread and water. . . . That is true, too; I acknowledge it, but I confessed it, and did penance for it. As for that other sin, I did not commit it, and you accuse me falsely. . . . There, I have no excuse to offer, I am guilty of that sin, but I throw myself on the mercy of God." Is not this sufficient to alarm us, my young friends, when we think of such a rigorous account being demanded of a solitary who had spent forty years in a desert? Which of us can flatter ourselves, after that, with having no reason to fear the judgments of God? Let us endeavor to live so that the devil shall have nothing wherewith to reproach us at the end of our lives, or at least that we may be able to answer him like this solitary—"It is true I committed that sin, but I did penance for it."—St. John Climachus, *l'Echelle Sainte* (*Holy Ladder*), VIIth degree.

132. *The Dream of a Solitary.*—"Remember thy last end, and thou wilt never sin," says the Holy Ghost. What proves the truth of this saying, my dear friends, is that when we reach the hour of death, we always repent of not having done as we ought. The following is one of a thousand instances of this kind. It is related by St. John Climachus himself. A hermit named Hesichus had retired to Mount

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Horeb, in Arabia. Being unfaithful to his vocation, he led for many years a very disedifying life. In this sad state he was seized by a serious illness which soon reduced him to the last extremity. God even permitted him to fall into a species of lethargy, in which he was believed dead. Nevertheless, he failed not to return to life, and, without saying what he had undergone, begged to be left alone. He then built up the wall of his cell, and remained there for twelve whole years without seeing any one; a little bread and water was conveyed to him every day through a little window, and that was all his nourishment. He was almost always in tears, and never spoke to any one. When it was observed, at the end of some twelve years, that he was going to die, the wall which blocked up the door of his cell was broken down, and some of the religious who had known him best, besought him to give them some words of exhortation before his death. "*Brethren*," said he, in a feeble voice, "*he who has the thought of death well engraved on his mind will never sin.*" And he expired, leaving all who were present deeply impressed by what they had seen and heard.—St. John Climachus, *Holy Ladder*, VIIth degree.

133. *The Judgment Painted by St. Methodius.*—There is in Turkey a vast province which was formerly called Bulgaria, the inhabitants of which were only converted to Christianity in the ninth century. Amongst their apostles figured conspicuously a holy monk named Methodius, who was also a most skilful

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painter. One day Bogoris, king of the Bulgarians—who had as yet refused to be converted, although leaving his subjects at full liberty—requested St. Methodius to paint some pictures for him to ornament a palace which he had just constructed. He recommended to him, amongst other things, to choose a subject, the representation of which would freeze with terror all who beheld it. The saint, in conformity with the king's directions, undertook to paint the Last Judgment. In his painting was seen Jesus Christ surrounded by angels, seated on a throne of dazzling glory, and clothed in the terrors of an angry judge. All men, without distinction of age or rank, were assembled before His tribunal, where they awaited trembling the sentence that was to decide their eternal fate. There was, moreover, in the several parts of the picture, a force, an energy, a vivacity, a warmth of expression, that added still more to the horror of the subject. The work being finished, was shown to the king, who was deeply moved by the sight of it; but his emotion increased much more when the painter explained to him each of the parts whereof the picture was composed. He could no longer remain obdurate, and corresponding thenceforward with the grace which spoke to him through a sensible object, he asked to be instructed in the mysteries of religion, and a short time after received baptism. Such was the effect of a mere painting of the Last Judgment; what shall it be, then, my dear friends, when we come to be present in reality at those for-

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midable assizes?—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 263.

134. *St. Philip Neri's "What Then?"*—People are wont to busy themselves a great deal about their future, that is to say, about making a position for themselves in the world, and choosing a state that will best ensure their success in life; unhappily, they do not always think enough of the true future, which is eternal. A young man named Spazzara, who lived in Rome in the sixteenth century, went one day to St. Philip Neri, and entered into long details about the study of law, which he had just commenced. He described the course which he meant to pursue in order to obtain the degree of doctor. "And then—?" demanded the Saint. "Then," replied the young man, much encouraged, "I will plead causes, and I hope successfully." "And then—?" added the Saint, again. "And then, people will begin to speak of me, and I shall enjoy a reputation." "And then—?" continued St. Philip Neri, smiling. "And then"—answered the young man, a little embarrassed, "and then—oh! I shall live at my ease, and I shall be happy." "And what then—?" "Well! then,—I shall end by dying." "And then," resumed the Saint, raising his voice, "and then, what shall you do when your own trial comes, when you shall be yourself the accused, Satan the accuser, and the Almighty God your judge?" The young man, who little expected such a conclusion, hung his head and began to consider

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within himself. A short time after, he renounced the study of law, and endeavored, by consecrating his life to the service of God, to prepare seriously for that final, *what then?* that is to say, that awful judgment, which shall be followed by eternity. Let us do the same, my dear young friends, and we shall never repent of it.—SCHMID et BELET, III., 530.

135. *A Temple Built at Cairo, by Assan.*—Speaking of the Last Judgment, children, I have a very singular, and yet a very touching story to tell you. You know that when we leave this world, we take nothing with us: dignities, riches, lands, houses, all is left at the door of the tomb; nothing remains with us but our good or bad actions. Hear now my story. It took place in the seventeenth century. There was in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, a Turkish governor, named Assan, who was distinguished by his avarice, and still more by his cunning. It was his desire to be spoken of throughout the world, no matter in what way. One day he took it into his head to have it proclaimed in every country, that he had the intention of building a magnificent temple to the true God, and that all persons who should come to Cairo to see him, on such a day, should receive from his hand some very acceptable present, and that without distinction of Mahometans, Christians, Jews, or idolaters. No sooner had the appointed day come, than there arrived at Cairo an innumerable multitude of travellers, pilgrims, and others, each and all eager to

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receive a share of Assan's bounty. They were all assembled in a vast court, and thence conducted into one still larger, but which they could only enter one by one through a very narrow passage. According as they entered this narrow passage, each one was stripped of his clothes, and clad in a new robe and tunic, under pretence of honoring him the more. All the old clothes thus taken off were heaped in one place, and set fire to. What was the result? When they were all reduced to ashes, there was found in the furnace an enormous quantity of gold and silver, because it is the custom, in those countries, for travellers to sew their money in their girdle, or in a fold of their robe. Assan, well aware of this custom, took the means I have just related to possess himself of all those treasures. You laugh at this scurvy trick, and yet you feel indignant; none but a greedy Turk would think of such a thing. But let us not forget, my young friends, that we, too, shall one day traverse, one by one, the narrow passage that leads from life to death, from time to eternity, and that we shall take nothing with us except our good or bad qualities. Let us think of this often, and prepare for it well.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, II., 345.

136. *Yes, yes, I will Confess.*—O my friends, but the judgments of God are terrible! People sometimes say, "at my death, I will be converted," yet God permits that they die in impenitence and despair. If you know a little book entitled *The New Think Well*

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On It, you may read, at page 98, the following story which is well adapted to make us reflect. A fisherman, whose name I dare not tell, had passed his life in the most disorderly and vicious habits; having fallen dangerously ill, a virtuous priest who took a charitable interest in him, came to see him, and urged him to think of his soul's salvation. The sick man made no answer. The minister of the Lord represents to him his perilous condition, and exhorts him to confess. "Yes, yes, father, I will go to confession in the course of a little time." The priest, animated by a holy zeal, urges him still more strongly. "Well, come to-morrow, and I will make my confession." On the morrow he returns. When he is alone with the sick man, he makes the sign of the cross, and tells him to begin his confession. The latter remains some time silent; all at once, in a terrific tone, he pronounces those awful words of Scripture: "The sinner shall open his eyes and be wroth." At that moment he buries his head in the bed, covers his face, and is silent. The confessor uncovers him. "I would advise you," he said, "to go on at once with your confession; this is no time for delay." "Yes, yes, father, I will confess," said he, continuing the terrible text—"The sinner shall gnash his teeth, and tremble with rage." And again he hides his face in the bed-clothes. The confessor once more uncovers him, and with tears beseeches him to think of his confession. "Yes, yes, father, let us go on, let us go

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on," and, for the third time, with a look of mortal terror, he buries his head still further, finishing those last words: "The desires of the wicked shall perish with them." The confessor, more and more alarmed, uncovers him again; alas! the wretch was dead!—BAUDRAND, *l'Ame Penitente, or, the New Think Well On It*, 98.

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CHAPTER X.

EIGHTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

I believe in the Holy Ghost.

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137. *Simon the Magician Flying in the Air.*—The Holy Ghost, when He comes into a soul, pours forth His graces in a most miraculous manner; this was especially the case in the first ages of the Church. The Christians, when the Apostles imposed hands on them, immediately received that Divine Spirit, and thenceforth wrought miracles which astounded the multitude. Simon the Magician, witness of these wonders, would fain obtain from the Apostles the power of also giving the Holy Ghost to those on whom he should impose hands. For this purpose he offered them a large sum of money. "Wretch!" cried St. Peter, "thy money perish with thee, thou that imaginest the gifts of God can be bought! Go, and do penance!" Ashamed of this scathing rebuke, Simon retires in a rage; but, instead of doing penance, he gives himself up more than ever to the abominations of magic and of impiety. After having corrupted all Samaria with his errors, he went to Rome with the intention of destroying the good

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which the Apostles had done there. One day he announced publicly that he would ascend into heaven in presence of all the people. You may well suppose that a great multitude assembled to witness such an extraordinary feat as that. And in fact, at the appointed moment, Simon the Magician was lifted up by the invisible power of the devil, and remained some time in the air. But his triumph was of short duration, for St. Peter, who had joined the crowd of spectators for the purpose of confounding the impostor, began to pray; the power of the devil ceased, and Simon fell so heavily to the ground that he broke all his bones, and died miserably a few days after. Terrible and just punishment of his blasphemous impiety!—*Acts of the Apostles*, VIII., 20.—TILLEMONT, *Hist. Eccles.*, I., 185.

138. *Errors on the Holy Ghost.*—In the Apostles' Creed, my young friends, there are but three or four words concerning the third person of the Blessed Trinity: *I believe in the Holy Ghost.* Several heretics availed themselves of this to advance frightful heresies with regard to that Divine Person. The most audacious of all was Macedonius, patriarch of Constantinople, whose sectaries were called Macedonians. He dared to maintain that the Holy Ghost is not God; that He is simply a spiritual creature, of the same nature as the angels, but of a much higher rank. Good Catholics were shocked at this impiety, and cried out with one voice against Macedonius. Nevertheless, that wretch, abusing the authority of his

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charge, violently persecuted the true faithful, and consigned a great number of them to death and tortures, to force them to say that the Holy Ghost is not God. Then Pope St. Damasus held at Constantinople, in the year 381, the second œcumenical council, which condemned that error and all others which might exist in relation to the Holy Ghost. In order to define forever the faith of the Church on that subject, he caused to be added to the Nicene Creed, which is sung in Latin every Sunday at Grand Mass, the following words, which you know by heart: *Et in Spiritum Sanctum Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit, qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur, qui locutus est per prophetas.* Which means in English: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and life-giver, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who, together with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified; who spoke by the prophets." Macedonius was not living at the time when this council was held; but, as generally happens to those who give themselves up to the dominion of pride, he had constantly refused to submit to the Church, and retract his error. He ended his life miserably about the year 361.—LASSAUSSE, *Explication du Cat. de l'Empire*, 101.

139. *Is the Holy Ghost God?*—The Holy Ghost is God, you know well, my dear children; He is the third person of the Blessed Trinity. I have read a story in this connection which is, I think, worthy of your attention. There lived in Spain, in the sixth

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century, a king of the Visigoths named Leovigild. This prince, whilst believing in the divinity of the Father and the Son, doubted a little, and even more than a little, concerning that of the Holy Ghost. St. Gregory, Bishop of Tours, was informed of it by deputies whom Chilperic, king of France, had sent to that king, and who, on their return, paid a visit to the holy bishop. As he watched with much care over the maintenance of the true faith he must needs try and convince the king of Spain. Then he charged the deputies to tell him: "Prince, since you do not believe in the divinity of the Holy Ghost, will you explain to us why it was that St. Peter said to Ananias: 'How did Satan tempt thee even to sin against the *Holy Ghost?* It is not to men thou hast lied, but to *God* himself.'" This text from so clear a passage of Scripture, quoted so seasonably, was a ray of light for the Visigoth king, and caused him to reflect seriously. He then saw plainly that the Holy Ghost is God, as well as the Father and the Son, and he frankly and fully adopted the doctrine of the Catholic Church, out of which there is no salvation. —Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 271.

140. *Speaking a Language Without Having Learned It.*—Those amongst you who have read attentively the Epistle of the Mass of Pentecost, have seen that when the Holy Ghost had descended on the Apostles, they spoke in every tongue. Here is how it happened: They spoke only in Hebrew, which was their mother tongue, and strangers understood them so well

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that those who only understood Latin heard them speak Latin, others Greek, others Arabic, and so on. This gift of tongues has been renewed several times since then, on behalf of some great Saints. Thus, St. Vincent Ferrier, a great missionary of the fourteenth century, preached always in Spanish or in Latin, which did not prevent his being understood by French, Bretons, Greeks, Germans, English, Hungarians, and other strangers who flocked to his sermons. The same thing is told of St. Anthony of Padua, and especially of St. Francis Xavier, Apostle of the Indies and Japan. But here is a fact no less interesting than any of the others. One day St. Dominick, being on his way to Paris, met some Germans who rendered him many kind offices. He wished much to requite them by some saving words, but knew not their tongue. One evening, however, he said to his companion: "If it please thee, brother, we will pray to God to permit us to speak German, so that we may announce Jesus Christ to these worthy people." Immediately, they knelt down, prayed with fervor, and arose full of the gift they had asked. They spoke German for four days with those kindly strangers, and left them only when they arrived at Orleans.—*Vie des Saints, mentionnés ci-dessus* (Lives of the Saints.)

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CHAPTER XI.

NINTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints.

I.—THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

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141. *Respect of Alexander the Great for the High Priest.*—The pastors of the Church are the representatives of God; they are entitled, therefore, to our most profound respect. The famous Alexander the Great, king of Macedon, who died 324 years before Christ, may teach us a good lesson in this respect. He was a pagan, and thought of nothing but the conquest of the entire world. After having taken a great number of cities, he marched, at length, on Jerusalem. The High Priest Onias, in his great disquietude, turned his eyes to heaven, and endeavored to propitiate the Lord by fervent prayers. God admonished him in a dream to be of good heart, and told him to clothe himself in his pontifical robes, then to put himself at the head of his people, and appear before this renowned conqueror. He obeyed, and went to meet Alexander as far as the hill of Sapha, whence there was a view of the City and the Temple. Every one expected that the haughty conqueror would de-

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stroy Jerusalem, and condemn the High Priest to die ignominiously. But, so soon as Alexander perceived that solemn procession, so soon as he distinguished the pontiff invested in his sacerdotal ornaments, advancing majestically at the head of his people, he approached him, bowed down to the ground before the Hebrew name of God engraved on the front of his diadem, and saluted him respectfully. All were seized with astonishment, and Parmenion, one of the favorite companions of the king, asked him why he had adored the High Priest of the Jews. "It was not him I adored," answered Alexander, "but the God whose minister he is." Onias then conducted to the temple of Solomon the king of Macedonia, who made an offering there, and retired full of respect for the worship and the priest of the God of Israel.—Josephus, *History of the Jews*, XI., 8.

142. *Zeal of St. Aphraates for the Church.*—The Church is our mother, dear children, and if we have for her the love which children owe their mother, we will not suffer her to be insulted or outraged in our presence. So it was always with the best and worthiest of men, St. Anthony, St. Acepsimas, St. Aphraates, and many others. The last named of these, St. Aphraates, had lived many years alone in his cell, when he learned that Valens, emperor of Constantinople, who had the misfortune of being an Arian, was grievously persecuting the Catholics. He not only expelled them from their churches in the cities, but pursued them even to the country districts, and to

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the most remote solitudes, where they concealed themselves, hoping to worship God in peace. St. Aphraates then quitted his retreat and went amongst the Catholics to encourage them. The emperor having remarked his long beard and his venerable appearance, asked him where he was going. "I am going," answered the solitary, "to offer up the Holy Sacrifice for the safety of the empire." "But would it not be better," said the emperor, "to offer it up in your cell, after the manner of solitaries?" "You are right, prince, I should do better to pray in my cell, if you only permitted me to do so; and I did so as long as the flock of Christ was secure in the fold; but now that it is driven thence, and in danger of being devoured by the wolf of heresy, I have had to leave my cell and come forth to its assistance. Thou hast thyself set fire to the house of God, and it is the duty of all good Catholics to hasten to extinguish the flames." You may well believe, children, that this discourse was not adapted to please Valens; nevertheless he did not dare lay hands on St. Aphraates, who continued to serve the Church and encourage the Christians till the end of the persecution.—RODRIGUEZ, *Christian Perfection*, V., 3.

143. *Honors Rendered to a Priest.*—There are none more worthy of our respect than the bishops and the priests, who are the ministers of Christ on earth. History presents numerous facts which may instruct us on this head. For example, St. Sulpicius Severus relates that St. Martin, bishop of Tours, being at

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Treves, at the court of the Emperor Maximus, preserved always the noble independence due to his episcopal dignity. Although the prince was not a very good Christian, he could not help regarding him with profound veneration. One day he invited him to dine, with the priest who was his companion; both were placed in seats of honor. During the repast, the imperial cup-bearer came, according to custom, to present the cup to the emperor; the latter, who desired to receive it from the hands of St. Martin, made a sign that it should be brought first to him. After St. Martin had drank from it, instead of presenting it to Maximus, as the latter expected, he offered it to his neighbor, the priest, whose dignity appeared to him superior to that of an earthly prince. Strange to say, not only was the emperor not offended, but he himself admired this conduct, and all present were equally edified by it. Assuredly, my friends, a sycophant, a courtier, would not have acted in such a manner.—SULPICIUS SEVERUS, *Life of St. Martin* Chapter XXIII.

144. *A Wicked Woman of Sirmich.*—It has sometimes happened, my young friends, that God chose to punish, even in this life, want of respect for the pastors of His Church. I have found one example of this kind in the life of St. Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan. The circumstance was as follows: The bishop of Sirmich, capital of Illyria, having died, the Arians did their utmost to replace him by a wretched priest of their sect. As soon as St. Ambrose was made

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acquainted with the state of affairs, he hastened to assist the imperilled church. He had to encounter not only the heretics, but the Empress Justina, by whom they were openly favored. What does the holy archbishop do? He boldly enters the Cathedral, seats himself on the throne prepared for the bishop, and there remains, notwithstanding the clamorous shouts and scandalous efforts of his enemies. No one dared ascend the steps to offer him violence, and it was only a wicked woman who had the audacity to pull him by his clothes. "Daughter," said the Saint mildly, "how darest thou lay thy hands on a priest of the Lord? Art thou not afraid that God may strike thee in His anger?" Alas! these prophetic words were not long without their fulfilment; the unhappy woman died suddenly that very night, and the sight of her funeral next day struck terror to the hearts of the enemies of religion. The Arians retired in confusion, and the Catholics were left at liberty to elect a bishop to the see so courageously defended by St. Ambrose.—PAULINUS, *Life of St. Ambrose*, No. 11.

145. *History of the Jew Benjamin.*—You know, my dear friends, that out of the Church there is no salvation; so, those who were not so happy as to be born Catholics, ought to do like the Jew of whom I am about to tell you. The Emperor Heraclius, returning from a journey to Jerusalem, passed by Naplousa, the ancient Sichem, and went to ask the hospitality of a very wealthy Jew, named Benjamin, by

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whom he was sumptuously entertained. Whilst they were at table, there arrived some Christians from the city, who complained bitterly of the bad treatment of all kinds which they had received at the hands of this Benjamin, whom they described as the most implacable and merciless enemy of the Christian name. Being interrogated by the emperor, Benjamin did not deny the fact, but declared that, according to the principles of his religion, he thought himself obliged, in conscience, to persecute the disciples of Jesus Christ, as his forefathers had of old persecuted their Founder himself in Jerusalem. The emperor immediately pronounced judgment; but he did it with a wisdom worthy of Solomon. He allowed Benjamin some time in order to obtain instruction in the fundamental truths of the Christian religion, whose members he believed himself bound to persecute. A pious and enlightened Christian, who had himself been converted from Judaism many years before, was charged to initiate him in the truths of faith. God blessed his undertaking; Benjamin opened his eyes to the truth, had himself baptized, became a fervent Christian, and remained always faithful to the grace which had been so providentially vouchsafed to him.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 443.

146. *How Will You be Buried?*—Let us beware, my young friends, of allowing ourselves to be seduced by heretics or bad Christians, who say—"Where is the use of troubling one's self about religion? all religions are good." Even as there is but one God, so

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can there be only one true religion. I have read in the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert a somewhat curious story, which I am going to tell you. A worthy solitary, who was very old, but not over well instructed, frequented indifferently the Catholic and the heretical places of worship; he received Holy Communion now from an Arian bishop, now from a schismatic bishop, and again from a Catholic priest, caring little which it might be. One night as he slept peacefully in his cell, God permitted that an angel appeared to him and asked him this question: "How do you wish to be buried when you are dead? Is it as the holy solitaries of Egypt, or as the Jews, or yet as the schismatics? Think of it well, and in three weeks I shall return to ask you the same question." The old man no sooner awoke than he hurried off to relate his vision to another solitary, in whom he had great confidence. The latter, much scandalized, said to him: "Why, father, where do you go to Communion?" "Wherever I happen to be; I never inquire which place it is." "That is precisely the affair you have to consider; you have relations with heretics, and, therefore, no one knows whether or no you are a good Catholic. Do not again receive Communion at the hands of the heretics or schismatics, and when the angel returns, tell him you wish to be buried in holy ground, like St. Paul, St. Anthony, and the other solitaries of Egypt." Let us profit by this lesson, my young friends, and have no communication with persons who pretend to

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reason on religion.—JOHN MOSCH, *Spiritual Meadow* (*le Pré Spirituel*), No. 178.

147. *Advisers in the Matter of Religion.*—There is nothing so contemptible as changing religion for money or some other temporal advantages. I have read in *Christian Anecdotes* a story on that subject. The Caliph Moutasem, having taken by storm a small town of Asia, put all the citizens and soldiers to the sword, except the principal townsmen and officers, who were, by his orders, conducted to Bagdad. When he reached there himself, he caused them to be bound, shackles put on their feet, and they cast into a loathsome dungeon. There, they never saw the light of day, and knew each other only by their voice. Their only nourishment was a little bread and water, their bed the ground, and some filthy rags their covering. When they were supposed to be entirely prostrated by suffering and long imprisonment, the caliph sent to them the most learned of his doctors, to induce them to renounce their religion. These persons feigned to come of their own accord, pretending before the prisoners that they had asked permission to go in with clothes and provisions to them. But the courageous Christians rejected with horror the proposals they made them. "Christians," said the Mahometans, "such pride but ill befits your condition. Ah! if you did but know the advantages we have to offer. Say, do ye not love your wives, your children, your friends, your country? Well! you have but one means of recovering all these; it is

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to make use of a little dissimulation, and comply somewhat with the wishes of our beloved caliph. He counts as nothing the conquest of cities in comparison with that of souls. If you embrace the law of Mahomet, as he desires, he will load you with favors, and you shall be free to return to your own country. There you shall be at liberty to choose whatever religion you may think the best." "And you," replied the prisoners, "who hold such language to us, would you do that, if you were in our place?" "Undoubtedly we would," cried all the wretched tempters in a breath. "Well! we shall do no such thing; we should be ashamed to take counsel, with regard to our religion, from those who value their own so little." And they sent them away with contempt and indignation. And did they not serve them right, my young friends? There, you see, was courage and fidelity!—REYRE, *Anec. Chret.*, 79.

148. *St. Stanislaus in a Protestant Temple.*—Beware of frequenting the temples or assemblies of heretics, lest evil should befall you. Imitate in this respect the scrupulous caution of St. Stanislaus Kotska. When he had renounced all earthly hopes, he quitted Vienna, in the disguise of a beggar, and bent his course towards Italy. During his toilsome journey, he met in a village, on the way, an open church, where he saw peasants praying. The holy youth, thinking it afforded him a good opportunity of hearing Mass and making his devotions, entered the church and began to pray like the others; he was not long

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there, however, till he saw, by the manner of celebrating the Divine office, that it was a Lutheran place of worship. He was deeply pained to see the holy mysteries profaned by heretical ministers, and to find himself unable to receive the Body of Our Lord that day in the Holy Communion. He wept bitterly, and complained so touchingly to God that he deserved to be consoled. Whilst he remained thus sad and despondent, he saw a troop of angels approaching him. One of them bore the Blessed Sacrament, and being come to Stanislaus, he placed the Sacred Host in his mouth, and the vision disappeared. It was thus that this pious youth was rewarded for his faith, and his horror of heretical assemblies.—PERE D'ORLEANS, *Vie de Saint Stanislaus de Kotska.*

149. *What Protestants Think of Our Salvation.*—We have the happiness, children, of being in the true Church; Protestants themselves admit that a good Catholic may be saved in his religion. It was this that decided Henry IV. to abjure his errors. A historian relates that this great king, having called before him a conference of the doctors of either church, and seeing that the Protestant ministers agreed with one accord that salvation was attainable in the Catholic religion, immediately addressed a Protestant dignitary as follows: "Now, sir, is it true that people can save their souls in the religion to which these gentlemen belong?"—"Certainly it is, Sire, provided that they live well in it."—"If that be so," said the monarch very judiciously, "prudence demands that

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I should be of their religion, not yours, seeing that, in theirs, I may save my soul, as even you admit; whereas, if I remain in yours, they maintain that I cannot be saved. Both prudence and good sense dictate that I should follow the surest way, and so I purpose doing." Some days after, this astute prince made his abjuration at Saint Denis. There is what may be called having both mind and heart.—Guillois, II., 67.

150. *Glorious Retractation of Fenelon.*—You may probably have heard of Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambrai. He was one of the most learned prelates in France; and was at the same time one of the most pious and submissive to the Church. In the year 1697 he had published a work entitled: "Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints," which work was condemned soon after by Pope Innocent XII. This sad news reached Cambrai on the 25th of March, 1699, the day of the Annunciation, just as the Archbishop was about to enter the pulpit. However deeply affected he might be by a decision which he did not expect, he only required a few moments' reflection to change the plan of the discourse he was about to deliver. He turned it on the perfect submission we are bound to pay to the authority of our superiors, on which he spoke with such touching fervor as to draw tears from his whole audience. On the 9th of April following he published a mandamus to this effect: "Our Holy Father the Pope has condemned a book entitled 'Explanation of the

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Maxims of the Saints,' by a brief dated March 12th, 1699. We adhere to that brief, beloved brethren, simply, absolutely, and without the shadow of restriction. With our whole heart we exhort you to entire submission and unreserved docility, lest insensibly you alter the simplicity of devotion to the Holy See, whereof we shall, by the grace of God, give you an example to the last moment of our life. God forbid that aught should be ever said of us, if it were not that being a pastor we showed ourselves more docile than the last sheep of our flock, and set no bounds to our submission." In order to leave to his diocese a monument of his submission and docility, he caused an ostensory to be made for the Blessed Sacrament, borne by two Angels; one of them trampled under foot divers bad books, on one of which was read: *Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints.* Let us beware, after such a beautiful example, to do like so many of the ignorant and unthinking who pretend to dogmatize, blame and criticise, when the decisions of the church or her pastors do not fall in with their ideas.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 306.

151. *The Little Confessors of the Faith in* 1791.—We need not go very far in order to find heroic examples of fidelity to the true religion. We have had many of them in 1791, when France was for a moment abandoned to the horrors of schism. As the Catholics almost everywhere refused to go to the churches where intruders, or "*Constitutional priests*"

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ministered, recourse was had to violence in order to force them. Wretches, paid by the usurping authorities, hastened with rods to the doors of the Catholic chapels. There they awaited, before and after the Office, the worthiest of the congregation, those, especially, who testified the greatest attachment to the true faith, and they amused themselves with publicly maltreating them, to force them to go to the Constitutional Church. Even children were not spared. Thus, I remember having read that the pupils of the Sisters of Charity, at Metz, were treated with the same cruelty, for having refused to hear the Mass of a schismatic priest. In vain did their tormentors threaten, and even beat them several times. "*Whip us, kill us, if you will*," said these children of eight or ten years old, "*but never shall you change our religion.*" Such, my dear children, should be our constancy and fidelity. Jesus Christ really died for us; is it not just that we should suffer for Him, if opportunity offers?—Reyre, *Anec. Chret.*, 470.

152. *Are There Several True Churches?*—There is but one only true Church; and that is so evident that no one possessed of even ordinary good sense can anywise doubt it. Here are two or three little stories on the subject. A Catholic priest and a Protestant minister were one day walking together; they chanced to meet a Jewish rabbi. "Hold," said the Protestant minister laughing, "we three are of so many different religions; now, which of us has the true one?" "I will tell you that," said the rabbi; "if the Messiah

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is not yet come, it is I; if the Messiah be come, it is this Catholic priest; but as for you, whether the Messiah be come or not, *you* are not in the right way." "I do not like those who change their religion," said a Protestant prince of Germany to the Count de Stolberg, recently converted to the Catholic faith. "Nor I either," answered the doctor, "for if my ancestors had not changed, I should not have been obliged to return to Catholicity." And that is very true, my young friends; a Protestant who becomes a Catholic does not change his religion; he does but return to the way which his forefathers were wrong in quitting. An excellent answer was made, on this subject, by a French ambassador, ill at Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. Some one asked him whether, in case he died there, he would not be sorry to have his ashes mingle with those of heretics. "No," he replied, "I would only ask to have the earth dug a little deeper, and I should be amongst your ancestors who were Catholics like myself."—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat., Hist., I.*, 303.

153. *The Debaters of Bale.*—We sometimes see simple peasants, people wholly illiterate, who are much more courageous in practising their religion than persons who are wont to boast of their intelligence. In a hotel in Bale, Switzerland, there were assembled, on the 1st of January, 1847, a numerous company, who had met for the purpose of discussing questions religious and political. Whilst they were debating with great warmth, there came in a poor

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man indifferently clad, but endowed with much reason and good sense. Seeing such a numerous company, he was at first a little surprised; but soon recovering his presence of mind, he saluted the party according to a pious custom of his country, by saying in German—*Glory to Jesus Christ!* There was only one of all present who answered aloud *Amen!* The others, opening their eyes very wide, looked grave, and said nothing. Some even began to smile disdainfully. The master of the house, who was a Protestant, or rather, belonged to no religion, said aloud: "It is easy seen that he is not one of us." The peasant, nowise embarrassed, had his answer ready: "I am willing to believe that, anyhow."—"And why are you willing to believe it, blockhead?"—"Because you gentlemen appear to me very much like Christians, who would crucify the Son of God again, if He were willing to die again. I don't want to insult any of you, gentlemen, but I tell you plainly, for all you talk so well, that I'd be ashamed to remain in such company." And so saying, our peasant walked away closing the door after him, and leaving the philosophic assembly no little disconcerted by such an apostrophe.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 427.

154. *The Reasoning of an American Indian.*—Speaking of the truth, "out of the Church there is no salvation," I remember a very amusing story, related by Father de Smet, the famous American missionary. "Amongst the Indians converted on the frontiers of Canada," said he, "is a certain Jean Bap-

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tiste, of whose family I am ignorant. This Jean Baptiste had been formerly a thief. On his conversion, the Black Robe enjoined him to make restitution of two dollars to a Calvinist minister in the neighborhood. Our man presents himself at the minister's house, when the following dialogue ensues: 'Well, what do you want?' said the preacher. 'Me rob you. Black Robe say to me, "Jean Baptiste, you give back the money." 'What money?' 'Two dollars; me bad savage, take from you—me now good Christian; me have the water of baptism on my head; me child of the Great Spirit. Here, take the money.' 'That is well. Steal no more. Good day, Jean Baptiste.' '*Good day*, not enough; me want something else.' 'And what do you want?' 'Me want a receipt.' 'A receipt! what need is there of a receipt? Did the Black Robe tell you to ask it?' 'Black Robe say nothing; Jean Baptiste (pointing at himself with his finger) want a receipt.' 'But what do you want with a receipt? You stole from me what you now give back; that is enough.' 'No, no, not enough: listen, you old, me young; you die first, me die after, you understand?' 'I do *not* understand; what do you mean?' 'Listen again; that will say much, that will say all. Me knock at the gate of heaven, the great chief, St. Peter, he open and he say, "That you, Jean Baptiste? what you want?" "My chief, me want to go in the lodge of the Great Spirit." "And your sins?" "Black Robe he forgive them all." "But you rob the minister—

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did you give back that money? You show me your receipt." Now you see how it is with poor Jean Baptiste, poor Indian with no receipt, he run all over hell to find you, because no salvation out of Black Robe's Church.' "—*Daily Rewards* (*Recompenses hebdomadaires*), No. CV., 29.

II.—THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

155. *Jeremiah in Heaven.*—A consoling truth is that of the Communion of Saints. The Jews of the Old Law were happy in believing in it as we do. Of that the following is a proof: Nicanor, general of the armies of Demetrius, king of Syria, made war on Judas Maccabeus. Having learned that this gallant chief had entered the country of Samaria, he marched to meet him with an army much superior in numbers to that of the Jews. Judas did not allow himself to be discouraged, and instead of putting trust in the valor of his soldiers, he placed it all in God. The night previous to the combat he had a celestial vision. It seemed to him that he saw the heavens open; there he distinguished the high priest, Onias, lately dead, praying for his people, and extending his hands over him as if to protect him. There soon appeared at his side another old man exceeding venerable and radiant with glory. Onias pointed him out to Judas Maccabeus, saying, "Seest thou that prophet? It is Jeremiah, the true friend of God's people; he prays for you all, and for the Holy City; fear not, there-

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fore!" So Jeremiah, taking a golden sword, gave it to Judas Maccabeus, saying: "Take this holy sword; it is the gift of God; with it thou shalt overcome the enemies of my people Israel." On his awaking, Judas failed not to relate this encouraging vision to his little army. They hasten to meet the enemy, praying as they go, they fight with supernatural courage, and obtain a splendid victory. Nicanor fled, leaving 35,000 slain on the field of battle. Let us do like Judas Maccabeus, my friends, and our patrons and protectors in heaven will assist us with their prayers. II. *Book of Maccabees*, Chap. XV.

156. *St. Peter Delivered from Prison.*—Do you know, my young friends, what a precious advantage is the Communion of Saints? Often, at the moment when we least think it, there are good souls praying for us without our knowing it, asking of God the graces most necessary for each according to their position. Thus it is that in the night prayer we pray for travellers, prisoners, the sick and the dying. Speaking of prisoners, hear what occurred to St. Peter, prince of the Apostles. Herod Agrippa, king of Judea, had him put in prison at Jerusalem and proposed to deliver him to the Jews at the festival of the Pasch. Meanwhile, the Church ceased not to pray for him; all the faithful of the city were interested in his fate, and St. Peter knew nothing of it. But he was not long left in ignorance, for the very night preceding the day on which Herod was to have him put to death, an angel suddenly appeared in his

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prison, tapped him on the shoulder to awake him, and said: "Arise quickly," (and his chains fell off of themselves), "take thy girdle, put on thy shoes, and thy garments, and follow me." In a few minutes, the holy Apostle was ready, and followed the angel, not knowing what he was about. He thought himself in a dream. They passed through the middle of the guard, through the iron gate, which opened of itself, and soon found themselves in the street, without any one having seen them. St. Peter then came to himself, the angel left him, and he succeeded in making his way to the house of Mary, mother of John Mark, where several of the faithful were at the moment assembled praying for him. It being in the middle of the night, the servant who came to the door prudently inquired "Who is there?"—"It is I, Simon Peter." No sooner had she recognized St. Peter's voice, than she ran in haste to tell those within, without even thinking of opening the door. They treated her as a fool. Every one said: "It cannot be Simon Peter; it was his angel guardian that spoke." Nevertheless, on opening the door they found that it was no other than the holy Apostle himself, and they gave thanks to God who had heard the prayers of the faithful. Such, my young friends, is the Communion of Saints.—*Acts of the Apostles*, Chap. XII.

157. *St. Nicholas an Intercessor Before His Death.*—Every one knows St. Nicholas; he is the patron of children, and yours, too, my little friends!

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If you knew how powerful he is, you would address yourselves to him in all confidence. Whilst he was yet bishop of Myra, in Turkey in Asia, his reputation for sanctity was so great that prayers were sometimes offered to him as though he were already dead. I remember reading of three lords of Constantinople, who being falsely accused before the Emperor, were thrown into prison and condemned to death. The sentence was to be executed next day, and you may suppose the unhappy men had but little inclination to sleep. Seeing that there was no chance whatever of their innocence being established, they had recourse to prayer. They had often heard of the bishop of Myra; every one said that he was a Saint; they all three threw themselves on their knees and besought him to assist them. Scarcely had they commenced to pray when God permitted that the Emperor, who was fast asleep in his palace, had a dream. He saw a venerable old man, robed as a bishop, who addressed him sternly and said: "Prince, art thou certain that the judgment pronounced on three of thy ministers is just? Beware!" and the vision disappeared. Next day the Emperor was careful not to have the prisoners executed; he reviewed the process of their trial, and failed not to perceive that they had been condemned unjustly. He caused them to be immediately liberated, after relating to them the dream he had had. The poor officers speedily discovered that their prayers had been heard by St. Nicholas, and that it was he him-

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self who had appeared to the Emperor. Is not this, my dear children, another proof of the Communion of Saints, and the kind interest they take in those who pray to them?—*Life of St. Nicholas.*

158. *The Mysterious Voice of Theodoret.*—The prayers which the saints offer for us, often even without our knowing it, preserve us sometimes from great misfortunes; they put the demon to flight, as he has himself declared. "One night as I was falling asleep," relates Theodoret, bishop of Cyr, in Syria, who lived in the fifth century, "I suddenly heard an unknown voice speaking to me in Syriac. It said to me very distinctly: 'Why hast thou taken it in head to fight against my servant Marcion? (This was a famous heresiarch whose errors were then making much progress.) Why dost thou make war on him? what harm has he done thee? Beware, I warn thee, for if thou ceasest not to hate and persecute him, thou shalt see what I can do, and learn by experience that it had been better for thee to have remained quiet. Know that I would have long since torn thee to pieces, were it not for the assistance of James and a troop of martyrs!' When this mysterious voice had ceased to speak, I asked one of my friends who slept in the same chamber, if he had heard anything. 'I did not lose a word of it,' said he, 'but I feared to make any noise, supposing that you were asleep.' Our servants and all the people of the house had likewise heard the words. We dressed ourselves in haste, and searched everywhere around in order to assure

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ourselves that there was no one concealed about the house; we found no one. I then understood that it was the devil who had spoken. I further understood that the St. James of whom he spoke was he whose old mantle I had preserved, and placed every night under my bolster. Finally, the troop of martyrs who were praying for me, were assuredly those of whom I kept some relics suspended in a small vial near my bed." This interesting story may teach us, children, to place confidence in the saints, and to venerate their precious relics with devotion.—THEODORET, *Eccles. Hist.*, Chap. XXI.

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CHAPTER XII.

TENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

The Forgiveness of Sins.

159. *St. Thais' Penance.*—There are few penitential lives more famous than that of St. Thais. She was a miserable sinner of Egypt, who lived in the fourth century, and employed for the ruin of souls the graces and talents she had received from nature. God inspired a holy abbot named Paphnutius with the desire of laboring for her conversion. He went in search of her and spoke to her at first on indifferent subjects. How great was his surprise to find her passably well instructed in her religion? "Now," said he, "you know, then, that there is a God?" "Not only do I know that there is a God, but I also know that He is present everywhere, that He sees all we do, and will one day judge us; the good shall go to the everlasting kingdom, and the wicked to a hell that shall never end." "What! Thais, you know all that, and yet do evil! you destroy your own soul and the souls of others!" "Father, I see that you are a man of God," said the poor woman, melting into tears; "impose on

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me whatever penance you please; I hope that God in His mercy will have pity on me. I only ask three hours to myself, and I return all yours." She left him immediately, went to collect her dress, her jewels, and all her finery, with what money she possessed, made a heap of them in the midst of the market-place, and set fire to them with her own hands. She returned then to St. Paphnutius, who shut her up in a little cell, close by a convent of nuns. He built up the door, and left her only a small window through which some bread and water was every day given her. Thais then asked him what prayer she should say to God. "To God! miserable sinner, you are unworthy even to pronounce His holy name. You will merely say to Him, without daring to raise your hands or eyes to heaven: 'O Thou who createdst me, have mercy on me!'" At the end of three years, God made known to St. Paphnutius that this heroic penitent had found favor in His sight. They opened her voluntary prison, although she begged with tears to be permitted to end her days in it. "Not so, my daughter," said her spiritual father, "God has forgiven you your sins." But that soul, sanctified by penance, was ripe for heaven; she died a fortnight after, and merited to be honored as a Saint.—GODESCARD, *Vie des Saints*, 8th October.

160. *David, Captain of Robbers.*—However great may be the sins which we have committed, we may always obtain pardon of them, provided we do a sufficient penance for them. This was experienced by a

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famous robber captain, named David, who devastated the Thebaide, in the fourth century. This unhappy man had killed and robbed hundreds, and even thousands of passengers or travellers; his depredations were so well and widely known, that people trembled at his very name. One day, nevertheless, God touched his heart, and David went to entreat the Superior of a monastery to receive him into his house. The Abbot did not recognize him; only, seeing him already old, he told him that his advanced age would not permit him to follow all the austerities of the rule, and that he would do better to remain in the world. The robber chief insisted; but seeing that he gained nothing, he drew himself up, and said in a voice of thunder, "Dost thou not know me? Know then that I am David, the robber chief. I ask to enter here to do penance, and I swear that if thou wilt not receive me, I will go back to my brigands, who know me; we will destroy all before us, kill every soul we meet, and then come and set fire to the convent." When the Abbot heard this, you may be sure he hastened to admit David into his monastery. The religious habit was given to the fierce penitent, who began by confessing his sins, and then gave himself up to the rudest austerity. All the day, and even all the night, he was heard to cry—"Mercy, my God, have mercy on me!" He accused himself aloud of his past crimes, and with so many tears and sighs, that they sometimes thought he would die. After he had passed several years in this hard penance, a heavenly voice said to him one

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day, "David, all thy sins are forgiven thee." "That is not possible," cried he in his misplaced humility. "I will never believe it, I have committed too many crimes." "To punish thee, David, for this want of faith, and to convince thee of the truth of what I tell thee, thou shalt remain dumb till thy death; speech shall only be given thee when it is necessary to sing the Office." This prediction was instantaneously accomplished. David spoke with ease when the time came for saying the Office, but beyond that he could not utter a single word. I need scarcely tell you, my young friends, that he died in the odor of sanctity, since his sins had been forgiven him.—Bollandus, *Act. Sanc.*, 26th June.

161. *A Very Difficult Confession.*—It is very easy for us to confess our sins, since we have only to tell them to one person, who is, moreover, bound to the strictest secrecy. Which of you, dear children, would have the courage to do as did that individual of whom St. John Climachus speaks? "A man who had previously made profession of being a robber, came to a monastery in Alexandria, during the time that I was there. He wished, he said, to embrace the religious life. The Superior, fearing that he was not sincere in taking this step, would put him a little to the proof. He commanded him to keep still for seven days, after which he made him declare all the sins he had ever committed. The poor sinner confessed them very sincerely; but the Abbot said to him: "I desire that you accuse yourself of your sins

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before all the brothers in the monastery." The man, who was touched with a true sorrow for his crimes, and had such a horror of them that he shrank from no shame or humiliation on account of them, answered that he was ready to confess them, not only before the brethren, but even, if it was desired, in the middle of Alexandria. Then the Superior assembled all the brethren, to the number of three hundred and thirty, and as it was Sunday, after the reading of the Gospel he brought forward the criminal, already justified before God. He was brought forward with his hands fastened behind his back, clad in haircloth, and with ashes on his head. Such a spectacle, of which they knew not the cause, touched the brethren so deeply that they all burst into tears. The holy Abbot, so zealous for the salvation of those under his direction, cried aloud to the penitent: "Stay where you are! you are not worthy to penetrate farther!" These words so terrified him, that he fell prostrate on the ground. He then began to confess all the sins he had ever committed, which he did before all the brethren, and with marks of penitence and contrition that edified all present. After this public confession, the Abbot made him cut off his hair, and received him into his community. He died a most holy death a few years after.—St. John Climachus, *Holy Ladder.*

162.—*The Ring Thrown into the Moselle.*—No one knows whether they are in a state of grace, or a state of sin, says St. Peter; hence it is that we have to work out our salvation in fear and trembling. Still

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we must not suffer our anxiety to lead us into despair, because the goodness of God is infinite. St. Arnoul, a celebrated minister of France in the reign of Clotaire II., and who afterwards became bishop of Metz, was one day much occupied with the desire of knowing whether God had forgiven him the sins of his youth, and completely effaced them from the book of His justice. His uncertainty on this point long tormented him, and filled his heart with the liveliest anxiety. Plunged in these despairing doubts, he went one day to the bridge over the Moselle, at Metz, stopped suddenly, and took the pastoral ring off his finger, and threw it into the river, saying: "If I find that ring again, I will believe that my sins are forgiven me." Although Arnoul be a saint, one cannot help blaming him here, for he gave no great proof of his confidence in the divine mercy or the efficacy of penance. We should do wrong, therefore, to imitate him. A long interval passed without Arnoul having any reason to suppose that his prayer was heard; nevertheless his ring was found one day in the belly of a fish that was served on his table. This event was noised abroad, and the miraculous ring was placed in a church. The historian, Paul Warnefrid, asserts that he heard the story from the mouth of the Emperor Charlemagne, who had seen the ring with his own eyes, in the Church of St. Sebastian at Metz. It was exhibited every year to pilgrims and the curious. For us, my friends, let us have more confidence in God than in St. Arnoul's

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ring.—PAUL WARNEFRID, *Histoire des Eveques de Metz.*

163. *The Body of a Damned Soul.*—Sin confessed is half forgiven, says the proverb; but, my friends, he who has not confessed, his sins cannot be forgiven either in this world or the other. There is a lamentable proof of this recorded in the Chronicles of the Benedictines. A young man named Pelagius, led in his father's house, where he was employed keeping sheep, a life so exemplary, that every one regarded him as a Saint. He lived so for several years. After the death of his parents, he sold all his goods, distributed the proceeds amongst the poor, and retired to a desert, where he led a most edifying life. But one day he had the misfortune to consent to a bad thought. He had not the courage to confess it, for fear of losing the good opinion of his confessor, and fell into a deep melancholy. Meanwhile his angel guardian appeared to him visibly under the figure of a pilgrim and said to him: "Go, Pelagius, confess thy sin, and God will forgive thee, and thou shalt recover the peace of thy soul." Thus warned, Pelagius took the resolution of doing penance, flattering himself that God would perhaps forgive him his sin without his confessing it. In that hope he entered a monastery, where he led a most austere life, in fasting and continual penance. Finding himself at the hour of death, he confessed for the last time, still without daring to confess his hidden sin. Every one thought him a Saint, and he was buried with honor. But

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what was the result? Three days in succession his body was found outside the grave, without any one knowing how it came there. The last time it happened the Superior went thither with all his monks, and addressing the dead body he said aloud: "Pelagius, thou didst obey me when alive; obey me now when thou art dead. Tell me, in God's name, whether it be His will that thou art buried in some other place?" "Alas!" cried the dead man, "I am damned for having concealed in confession a bad thought on which I had dwelt with pleasure. Behold the state in which my body is!" At the same moment his body appeared all on fire like red-hot iron. The sight terrified every one present, and the Superior caused Pelagius to be buried outside the cemetery of the monastery. See, my friends, what a dreadful thing it is to die without having obtained full remission of one's sins.—Abbe Favre, *le Ciel ouvert*, 59.

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CHAPTER XIII.

ELEVENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

The Resurrection of the Flesh.

164. *The Resurrection of Job.*—All the nations of antiquity believed in the immortality of the soul; so did they all believe that men shall one day rise again to be rewarded or punished according to their works. The strongest proof I can give you of this ancient belief, is the faith-inspired language of the holy man Job. You, doubtless, know his history. Here is the substance of it: Job was an Arabian prince who lived more than two thousand years before Christ. He was extremely rich, but still more virtuous. The devil, jealous of his virtue, obtained permission to deprive him in succession of all his flocks of camels, oxen, and sheep, to make all his children die, and finally to reduce him to such a state of leprosy and misery, that he spent his life on a dunghill. At each of these misfortunes Job contented himself with saying: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; may His holy name be blessed!" He was then visited by three of his friends, to whom it was his pleasure to praise Providence for all it had done.

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Then, taking a more solemn tone, he cried with admirable faith: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and on the last day I shall rise out of the earth: and I shall be clothed again with my skin; and in my flesh I shall see my God, who I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom." These are the sentiments, so fine and so clear, which have induced the Church to insert numerous passages from the Book of Job in the Office of the Dead.—*Job*, Chap. X.

165. *The Seven Brothers of the Maccabees.*—I regret much, my friends, that the history of the seven Maccabees brothers is a little long; I can only give you an abridgment of it. But what struck me the most in that story is the confidence with which those pious martyrs awaited the resurrection and life eternal. Antiochus Epiphanius, king of Syria, a cruel and inhuman prince, thought that he could force them by torments to renounce their religion. He had them tortured one after the other, beginning with the eldest. One of them, the second, I think, had the skin of his head torn off with hooks; when he was on the point of expiring, he said to the king: "You take from us the present life, but the King of kings will one day raise us up for life eternal." The fourth made use of nearly the same words: "It is better," said he, "to be slain by men, because we hope that God will restore our lives at the resurrection." When none remained but the youngest of these

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valiant champions, the king sent him to his mother, hoping that she would prevail upon him to apostatize. But that mother, worthy of such children, exhorted him, on the contrary, to walk in the footsteps of his brethren. And so he did, saying to Antiochus: "My brethren had to endure only temporary pain, and now they have entered into life eternal." At length the sacrifice was completed by the execution of the mother, who went to rejoin in Limbo the seven children she had had the happiness of giving to God. Ah! my friends, if we thought of the resurrection to come, we should be much more faithful in discharging our duties and avoiding sin.—*II. Maccabees*, Chap. VII.

166. *The Unfinished Tomb.*—The Greek emperors of Constantinople had a somewhat singular custom, but one very useful and salutary for their personal conduct. The day that one of them was crowned, it was forbidden to speak to him on any business whatsoever, but there appeared before him sculptors and marble-cutters, who brought with them five or six beautiful specimens of marble of divers colors, and said to him: "Prince, which of these marbles will it please your majesty to select for your tomb, that we may set about preparing it?" The object of this strange custom was to make the new emperor understand that being mortal like other men, he ought to employ the few years he had to live in the care of his soul and the good government of his people. St. John the Almoner, patriarch of Alexandria, found

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this custom so conformable to the sentiments which ought to animate Christians, that he would himself profit by it. He had a tomb made for himself, but never entirely finished; only he commanded that every year, on some grand festival day, some one should come and say to him aloud, before every one present: "My lord, your tomb is not yet finished; order them to finish it, *because*, as Jesus Christ says, *you know not the day or the hour*." These words, spoken at such a time, were worth a good meditation; were they not, my young friends?—LEONTIUS, *Life of St. John the Almoner.*

167. *St. Francis Borgia Before a Dead Body.*—Death is an eloquent preacher, who gives us continual lessons on the nothingness of earthly things. The very sight of a grave or a corpse has sometimes sufficed to make saints. Here is a striking example of the kind. St. Francis Borgia, before quitting the world, was Duke of Gandia and one of the most illustrious grandees of Spain. The Empress Isabella having died in 1539, Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany and King of Spain, deputed Francis to convey and accompany her body to Grenada, where was situated the tombs of the kings of Spain. This mission was very honorable, and yet God made use of it to make the Duke of Gandia an humble religious. When the body had reached its destination, and was about to be lowered into the royal vault, Francis Borgia had to open the coffin, in order to swear upon it that those were really the mortal

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remains of his sovereign, the Empress Isabella. What was his horror and disgust on beholding, instead of a beautiful princess, a foul and disgusting corpse! "What," cried he, "is this all that remains of my gracious sovereign? Where, then, is her smooth white brow, her fresh fair cheeks, her smiling lips, and her radiant eyes?" This thought and these reflections acted so promptly on his mind and heart, that he resolved to consecrate himself wholly to God. Accordingly, having accomplished his mission, arranged his temporal affairs, and provided suitably for his children, he entered the company of Jesus and became a great saint. I was right, you see, in telling you that death is an eloquent preacher.—*Life of St. Francis Borgia*, I., 41.

168. *Charles the Fifth Celebrating His Own Obsequies.*—Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany and King of Spain, may serve us as a model on the article of preparation for death. He was only 55 years old when he abdicated the crown, and renounced all his titles and dignities to consecrate his last years to the great work of preparing to appear before God. He retired to the monastery of St. Just, on the frontiers of Spain and Portugal, and gave himself up to the same exercises as the monks. By night, he rose like them to sing the Office; by day, he divided his time between prayer, reading and study. His sole recreations were a short walk in the fields and the culture of a small garden. There was all that remained to him of so many states and provinces which

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he had once possessed. But this is not all, he contented himself with the simplest and coarsest food, and often fasted with the rigor of a cenobite. Every Friday in Lent, he gave himself the discipline till the blood almost flowed, in order to obtain more efficaciously the pardon of his sins. But he did something more extraordinary still. In order to familiarize himself with the thought of death, so salutary for a Christian, he would have his obsequies celebrated as though he were already dead. He laid himself then in a coffin, and was borne to the church. The walls were hung with black, tapers were lit, the bells were rung, prayers recited, and the Office of the Dead sung, precisely as if Charles the Fifth had been really dead. However extraordinary this ceremony might be, the event showed that it was by a sort of presentiment he had had it solemnized. The very next day he was seized with the malady of which he died. His death was most edifying, for he had remembered the words of our Lord, "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"—FELLER, *Universal Biography*, III., 352.

169. *God's Turn Will Come.*—"I will laugh at the destruction of those who have laughed at me during their life." These frightful words were pronounced, my dear friends, by God himself, and many, many times have the impious seen their fulfilment. Hear what befel d'Alembert, one of the philosophers most hostile to religion. He had been present at the death of his friend Voltaire, and had had the cruelty to

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prevent a priest from being called in. When he himself reached his last hour he felt so keenly the sting of remorse that he sent in all haste for the pastor of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. Condorcet, one of his friends, went out on pretence of going to seek him, and returned in a few minutes, saying that he would come presently; it was a lie, for he did not go. But d'Alembert, unable to wait, sent once more this perfidious friend, who again went out, walked about for some time, then returned saying that the priest would come very soon, but that for the moment he could not come, being engaged. This, too, was a falsehood; the wretch was playing on d'Alembert. The latter, being a prey to the most fearful anguish, sent a note by a faithful servant; but alas! he had not yet returned when d'Alembert breathed his last. This happened in Paris on the 29th of October, 1783. What a lesson for us, and oh! my young friends, let us profit by it; let us not mock God, for assuredly His turn shall come.—Guillois, *Explic. du Cat.*

170. *Death of Collot d'Herbois.*—It is dreadful to fall into the hands of the living God. To convince oneself of this, my dear friends, it would suffice to witness the scenes of despair which accompanied the death of some great criminals. Collot d'Herbois had played the most execrable part during the Revolution. Becoming a representative of the people under the reign of Terror, he had the Lyonese massacred in hundreds. The very accomplices of his crimes regarded him as a man so dangerous that they thought it

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expedient to exclude him from society, by banishing him to the deserts of Guiana. Transported to that tropical country, he looked upon himself as the most miserable of men. "I am punished," would he sometimes exclaim, "the abandonment in which I find myself is a hell." Being attacked by a malignant fever, he was to be taken to Cayenne. The negroes charged with this commission threw him on the public road with his face turned to the scorching sun. They said in their own language: "We will not carry that murderer of religion and of men." "What is the matter with you?" asked the doctor, Guysouf, when he arrived. "I have a burning fever and perspiration." "I believe it; you are sweating crime." He called on God and the Blessed Virgin to assist him. A soldier, to whom he had preached irreligion, asked him why he invoked God and the Blessed Virgin, he who mocked them some months before: "Ah! my friend," said he, "my mouth then belied my heart." He then cried out: "Oh! my God, my God, can I yet hope for pardon? Send me a consoler, send me a priest, to turn mine eyes away from the furnace that consumes me. My God, give me peace!" The spectacle of his last moments was so frightful, that no one could remain near him. Whilst they were seeking a priest he expired, on the 7th of June, 1796, his eyes half open, his hands clenched, and his mouth full of blood and froth. His burial was so neglected that the negro grave-diggers only half covered him,

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and his body became the prey of swine and birds of prey.—Debussi, *Nouveau Mois de Marie*, 251.

171. *Mozart's Requiem.*—How little we can count on life! A thousand examples prove this truth. One of the most extraordinary is that which relates to Mozart, the most famous musical composer of his day in all Germany. One day, a stranger presents himself before him: "Sir," said he, "I have been commissioned to ask a favor of you; it is to compose a *Requiem* as soon as possible, for a person of distinction who does not wish to give his name. He desires that you will employ all your talent on this *Requiem*, for he is an excellent judge of music, and will pay you whatever you ask." Mozart went immediately to work, and worked day and night with so much ardor that he fell ill. But the most curious part of the story is that no one claimed the famous *Requiem*, which was finished at the very moment when the illustrious composer's strength was completely exhausted. His malady went on increasing, and at length he died in Vienna, on the 5th of December, 1791, being scarcely thirty-six years of age. But what is more singular still, his friends, desirous of making his obsequies worthy of himself, found nothing grander or more suitable for that sad occasion than his *Requiem*, and it was executed for the first time at his own funeral service. And that is what may any day happen to us; the things we do to gain a living are perhaps those that may hasten our death. Let us, then, be ever on our guard.—Feller, *Biographie Universelle*, IX., 53.

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CHAPTER XIV.

TWELFTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

Life Everlasting.—Amen.

I.—PARADISE.

172. *St. Bernard's Little Brother.*—"But earth seems to me vile and contemptible when I contemplate heaven!" said the great St. Augustine; and was he not right, my young friends? A child once made a reflection almost as fine on the occasion which I am about to relate. St. Bernard having reached man's estate, was not slow in perceiving that it is very hard to save one's soul in the world, and resolved to leave it. His parents and relatives loved him so much that, although they were full of faith and piety, they did their utmost to keep him amongst them. But Bernard made them understand so well the happiness and the advantages of the religious life, that he not only obtained their consent, but even prevailed on four of his brothers to follow him; it was only the youngest who remained in the paternal house. At the end of six months, these five young men quitted Châtillon-sur-Seine, and passed by Fontaine, near Dijon, to ask their father's blessing. They then set

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out for the Abbey of Citeaux, where they were to pronounce their vows. Crossing the court-yard of the Castle of Fontaine, they perceived little Nivard, their young brother, playing with some children of his own age. "Adieu, little brother Nivard," said they, "we are going away; we leave you to inherit all our father's possessions; you shall have all our lands and all our wealth." "Yes, yes," answered the wise child, "you take heaven and leave me earth, the shares are not equal, and I will not be satisfied with mine." In fact, my dear children, when little Nivard grew up, and his father had no need of his services, he went to rejoin his brothers in their monastery, and, in his turn, left earth for heaven.—RATISBONNE, *Life of St. Bernard.*

173. *I Want to Save My Soul.*—A famous author of the fifteenth century, Denis the Carthusian, relates that a woman, seeing her son resolved on becoming a religious, did all she could to prevent him. The young man remained immovable in his resolution, and to all his mother's arguments he made but the one answer: "Mother, I want to save my soul." He entered a religious order and took the habit. But, at the end of some years, his fervor relaxed, and he unhappily forgot the good resolutions which seemed formerly to animate him. He fell ill, and so dangerously, that the last sacraments were administered to him, after which he fell into a swoon, which led to the belief that he was dead, or nearly so. He was not as yet, however, for in that species of lethargy, it seemed to

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him that he appeared before the judgment seat of God. There, whilst other persons were being judged, he recognized his mother, who was unhappily on the left side amongst the reprobates. She approached him, and began to reproach him bitterly with his tepidity. "So you are there," said she. "What use was there in your quitting the world? do you no longer remember those words which you so often repeated to me: '*I want to save my soul?*'" The young man, covered with confusion, knew not what to answer. But God permitted that he not only recovered from his trance, but also recovered his health. Then was seen the happy effect of the warning he had received from Heaven. He wept incessantly for his faults, busied himself only in expiating them by penance, and, very far from neglecting the usual fasts and austerities, he added others to them every day. His brethren tried sometimes to moderate his fervor, but he answered them with tears in his eyes: "When I could not bear the reproaches of my mother, how could I bear those of Jesus Christ at the last judgment?" And we, my good friends, let us try to avoid those reproaches, by working out our salvation with all the care of which we are capable.—Debussi, *New Month of Mary*, 187.

174. *The Learned Man who Lost his Memory.*—You remember, my little friends, having sung a hymn in which is often repeated: "*Le ciel, le ciel en est le prix* (Heaven, heaven is the prize)?" That word, *heaven*, ought to be the last pronounced before one

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dies. This is what happened to a holy man, named Thomas Canisius. He was a very learned monk, but the day on which he heard of the death of his brother, Father Canisius, who was also very remarkable for his learning and his virtue, a singular accident occurred to him: he completely lost his memory. He neither remembered his studies, nor his prayers, nor even his name or his age. It was only the holy names of Jesus and Mary that he could remember. So, for five years that he afterwards lived, he only moved his lips to pronounce them, making on himself the sign of the cross. When he was seen approaching his last hour, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction was administered to him. He then regained a little strength, and even his memory returned, but only to utter the following words: "*In Heaven! in heaven!*" Scarcely had he pronounced them twice or thrice with all the fervor of which he was capable, when he yielded his soul to God, and went to take possession of that paradise after which he sighed with so much love.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 542.

175. *A Preacher in Heaven.*—Here is a death such as I would like to die. The Abbe Boursoul, who, for forty years, exercised the holy ministry at Rennes, in the Department of Ille-et-Vilaine, was one of the holiest priests and best preachers of the eighteenth century. He was often heard to say, in the fervor of his zeal: "Oh! if I could die arms in hand! If God would only give me the grace of dying either in the pulpit or in the confessional!" Notwithstanding

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his age and his infirmities, he had preached the Lent at Toussaint, a parish of the city of Rennes. On Easter Monday, the 4th of April, 1774, he said Mass at five o'clock, and went immediately after to shut himself up in his confessional. At three o'clock in the afternoon, he ascended the pulpit to continue his Lenten sermons. That day he preached on heaven. He spoke with all the vigor and ardor of youth; his voice had an extraordinary strength and clearness; his movements were so rapid, his gestures so vehement, that he indicated beforehand what he was going to say. Towards the end of the first point, after having given the liveliest and most touching description of the beauties of paradise, he made a new effort and exclaimed: "No, never shall it be given to the weak eyes of man to behold here below the splendor of the Divine Majesty." Then, lowering his voice: "It will be in heaven that we shall see it face to face and without a veil." These words were pronounced in a deep and penetrating voice; he repeated them in Latin; *Videbimus eam sicuti est.* Finishing these last words, he bowed his head on the edge of the pulpit and expired. His eyes were fixed on heaven and remained in that position. The consternation of the people was beyond description; they wept, they cried aloud, they threw themselves on their knees, and some even fainted away. Every one cried aloud: "A Saint! a Saint! he died speaking of the happiness of heaven!" There was even a little child kneeling beside his mother, who exclaimed: "He spoke of

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paradise and he is going there." Oh, my friends, how happy should I be to die such a death as that! and would not you, too?—ABBE CARRON, *Modeles du Clerge*, I., 257.

176. *It Goes Badly, Father, but* . . . . "Heaven suffers violence," says Our Lord, "and only the violent bear it away." I could cite a thousand examples, my young friends, of the truth of these words, but I shall confine myself to one. I knew a French missionary who had the happiness of converting a great number of sinners; one in particular he brought back to virtue, a poor young man, previously abandoned to the fury of his passions. His conversion was so sincere that he quitted the world in which he had to deplore so many grievous falls, and retired to a monastery of the Grande-Chartreuse. At the end of some years, the missionary having occasion to visit the neighborhood, remembered his former penitent and went out of his way to pay him a visit. "Well! my dear friend," said he, "how do you find yourself now? how goes your new mode of life?" "It goes very badly, father; I have as much trouble to-day in keeping silence and retreat, in observing fasts and abstinences, as I had seven years ago. My cell seems to me a prison; my coarse habit weighs heavily on my shoulders; the Offices appear to me very long and very fatiguing; in a word, I repeat, it goes badly." The poor missionary knew not what answer to make to this language, which appeared to him the expression of weariness and disgust. But the young

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religious was not slow in extricating him from his embarrassment; he threw himself on his neck and tenderly embraced him, saying: "Rest content, my good father; when I tell you it goes badly, I mean to say that it is hard on poor human nature; but it is so much the better, because I hope that, by these voluntary sufferings, the good God will have mercy on my past transgressions. I suffer, but I am content, for I remember that it is by that means alone I can reach heaven.—FILASSIER, *Dict. Hist. d'Education*, II., 503.

177. *Higher than the Stars.*—Amongst the astronomers who have made France illustrious in the nineteenth century, few have been so much spoken of as M. Leverrier. He is specially known as having discovered, in 1846, the planet Neptune, which is so distant from us that it can only be seen with the aid of a very good telescope, although it is one hundred and eleven times larger than our Earth. At the end of November, 1847, the Prefect of the Department of La Manche had Benediction in his chapel at St. Lo, and invited on the occasion a large number of distinguished persons. Among them was M. Leverrier, to whom every one hastened to pay their respects. Mgr. Robiou, Bishop of Coutances, addressed to him this charming compliment: "Sir, it cannot be said of you what is said of many others, that you have raised yourself to the clouds; of you it may be said that you have raised yourself to the stars." "My lord, that is not sufficient. I mean to ascend still higher;

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I meditate an enterprise much more important." All present listened with great attention; they were anxious to know what new discovery the illustrious astronomer had in contemplation. "Yes, my lord," resumed M. Leverrier, "I mean to rise higher than the stars. I mean to ascend to heaven itself, and I hope your lordship will assist me by your pious prayers." Could any one give a more Christian, and, at the same time, a more graceful answer, my young friends? Let each of us say with the famous astronomer: "And I, too, mean to ascend higher than the stars, I mean to ascend to heaven."—*L'Ami de la Religion*, 9th November, 1847.

II.—PURGATORY.

178. *Purgatory Amongst the Jews.*—The most precious fact that I know of in the Old Testament concerning Purgatory, is that which we read in the history of Judas Maccabeus. The Jews were at war with the King of Syria, because that prince would oblige them to submit to him and adore idols. Judas, their brave chief, led them almost always to victory, but his army was enfeebled by its very victories. Having at length obtained an armistice, they thought of paying to the dead the honors due to them. Judas was full of faith; he knew that the Jews who had fallen in battle should one day rise again, and that great mercy was in store for those who died in piety. Hence it was that he made a gen

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eral collection throughout the country; his messengers went amongst the twelve tribes of Israel, and returned with rich offerings; they had collected more than ten thousand drachms of silver, that is to say, the value of more than one hundred thousand francs. Judas sent this sum to Jerusalem, that it might be employed in having sacrifices offered in the temple for the repose of the souls of the dead soldiers of the army. It was on this occasion that he pronounced those words, so often repeated: "It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." These words, my dear children, prove very clearly that there is a purgatory, and that we may, by our prayers and good works, relieve the poor souls therein detained.—*II. Book of Maccabees*, Chap. XII.

179. *A Child in Purgatory.*—It sometimes happens, my little friends, that you commit faults which you regard as trivial, and to which you attach no importance. Yet young as you are, you will be condemned to expiate them in purgatory, if you have not done penance for them on earth. That was what happened to a little boy of your own age, who was called Dinocrates, and was born at Carthage, in Africa, about the year 195. He died at the age of seven years, of a horrible cancer which he had in his cheek. His sister, named Perpetua, was older than he; being a virtuous young person, she was arrested in a great persecution, and thrown into prison to force her to worship idols. It was then that she prayed

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to God for the soul of her little brother, without knowing whether he had need of her prayers or not. It was during the night. All at once this holy martyr, who was to be delivered to the wild beasts some days later, had a vision. She seemed to see Dinocrates, with many other persons, in a dark and filthy place. His face was pale and squalid, his eyes inflamed, and his cheek still covered with the ulcer of which he died. She saw that he suffered much, and was tormented by a burning thirst; there was, indeed, beside him a large basin full of water, but the edges were too high for him to reach. St. Perpetua, touched by sufferings which were undoubtedly the representation of those he endured in purgatory, prayed for him with renewed fervor. Some days after, having changed her prison, she had another vision, in which she saw her young brother, his body all clean, his garments white, his face radiant with the freshness of health; she then understood that her prayers had been heard, and that Dinocrates was delivered from purgatory. It is she herself who relates these visions, read in the Acts of her Martyrdom, which occurred about the year 203.—D. Ruinart, *Veritable Actes des Martyrs*, I., 216.

180. *Prayers for a Dead-Alive.*—The most extraordinary history that I have read concerning purgatory is one, I think, which is related by St. John the Almoner, patriarch of Alexandria, at the end of the sixth and beginning of the seventh century. A little before a great mortality which happened in that city,

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several inhabitants of the Isle of Cyprus were brought into Persia, and thrown into a prison so rigorous that it was called the jail of *oblivion*. Some of them, however, succeeded in escaping, and returned to their own country. A father and a mother, whose son had been taken from them, inquired of them concerning their son. "Alas!" said they, "your son died on such a day; we ourselves had the sad consolation of burying him." The afflicted parents hastened then to have a service celebrated and solemn prayers offered up three times a year for the repose of their son's soul. But, wonderful to relate! what was their surprise to see that son so deeply lamented, knock one day at their door and throw himself into their arms! They had been told that he was four years dead, and yet he still lived; the person buried by the prisoners had resembled him much; that was all. "What! is it, indeed, thyself, dear son? Oh! how we have wept for thee! Thrice every year we have had prayer and sacrifice offered up for thee." "And on what days were those services solemnized?" asked the son with much eagerness. "On the holy days of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost." "Exactly," he cried, "those were the very days on which I saw every year an officer in shining apparel who came and took off my chains, and opened the gate of my prison; I went out into the city, walked wheresoever I liked, without any one appearing to notice me; only, when evening came, I found myself miraculously chained in my prison. It was the fruit of your good prayers, and

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if I had been in purgatory they would have relieved me all the same; I beseech you that you do not forget me when the good God shall call me to Himself."—LEONTIUS, *Life of St. John the Almoner.*

181. *Purgatory in Painting.*—I have read in the *Dictionary of Education* a very amusing anecdote, which may, nevertheless, be cited in support of what I have said of purgatory. Certain canons having had to repair their church, added to it a chapel dedicated to the souls in purgatory. The sculptor who was charged with the decorations, represented the poor souls in the midst of the flames; but he was so malicious as to place in the very midst of his figures the portrait of a neighboring abbot. The likeness was so perfect that no one could mistake it; the Superior himself recognized it. He immediately complained to the canons, who summoned the sculptor and laughingly besought him to deliver that poor soul from his purgatory. The artist excuses himself under pretence that he could not touch his work without spoiling it. The complaint is carried before the archbishop. The prelate inquires of the sculptor if the likeness is accidental. "No, my lord," said he, "I did it on purpose." "Then you must destroy that figure, for it is an outrage on the original." "I shall do no such thing, my lord, and your lordship will not ask me to do it, I am sure, when you hear my reasons. Last year, this reverend Superior proved in one of his sermons that those who die without having made satisfaction are detained in the flames

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of purgatory till they have paid their debts. Now, his procurator has owed me a hundred crowns these two years past, and I am not yet paid. So that is just the reason why I thought myself authorized to place the abbot in my purgatory. I assure you, my lord, I will leave him there forever, unless your lordship will have the goodness to see me paid." The prelate and all who were present could not help laughing at this singular justification. The complainant himself could not object to the demand thus made; he acquitted himself with a good grace, and ordered his procurator to pay the hundred crowns. The sculptor, on his side, modified the figure in purgatory, and represented it ascending to heaven, like a soul which has fully satisfied the justice of God.—Filassier, *Dict. d'Education*, II., 155.

182. *Burial of a Little Dog.*—We sometimes meet, children, with good peasants who, upon occasion, know how to give useful lessons to those who need them. I have read a circumstance of the kind which amused me much. It was, I think, in the Department of Tarn-et-Garonne. A worthy peasant noted for his faith and piety, came to lose a dog which had rendered him great service, and to which he was much attached. Instead of throwing the body of the poor animal into a ditch, or on the skirt of a wood, fearing that he might be devoured by wolves he made a grave in his own ground and there buried him. He was engaged in covering him up when a Protestant minister passing by began to laugh at him, saying: "Now, Ma-

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thurin, you are burying your dog without saying anything; you ought, at least, to sing a *Libera* or a *De Profundis* over him." "Alas, I can't," said the peasant with great composure. "And why so?" "Ah, my dog was a *Protestant*, and I'm forced to bury him like the Protestants, who pretend to say that prayers said for the dead are of no use." The minister went off ashamed and confused; but, if he had been in good faith, he must needs have confessed that Mathurin's reasoning was both just and true.—F. A. M., *Joyeux Passe-tems de la jeunesse*, 104.

183. *A Protestant in Purgatory.*—I once read, I do not remember where, that a Swiss heretic was converted to the true religion, solely because that Catholics have the consoling doctrine of *purgatory*, whilst Protestants will not admit it. He was a Lutheran already advanced in years. He had a brother who passed for a worthy man according to the world, but had also the misfortune of being a heretic. He fell ill, and notwithstanding the care of several physicians, he died and was buried by a Protestant minister of Berne. This death was a terrible blow to the person of whom I write. In order to divert his mind he tried to travel; but the thought of his brother's eternal lot pursued him everywhere. He one day chanced to meet on board a steamboat a Catholic priest with whom he entered into conversation. Confidence was soon established between them; they spoke of death, and the afflicted traveller asked the priest what he thought of it. "What I

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think, sir, is this: when a man has faithfully discharged on earth his duty to God, his neighbor and himself, he goes straight to heaven; if he has not fulfilled them, or neglected any of those which are essential, he goes straight to hell; but if he has only to reproach himself with light faults, which are inseparable from our frail nature, he passes some time in purgatory." At these words the Protestant smiled cheerfully; he was consoled. "Sir," he exclaimed, "I will become a Catholic, and for this reason: Protestants admit only heaven and hell; but, to go to heaven, one must have nothing whatever to reproach themselves with. Now, although my brother was a good man, he was not exempt from those trivial faults of which you spoke just now; those faults will not damn him, but they are sufficient to prevent him from going to heaven; there must, therefore, be an intermediate place to expiate them; consequently, there must be a purgatory. I will become a Catholic, that I may have the consolation of praying for my brother."—G. S. G.

III.—HELL.

184. *Dives and Lazarus.*—Amongst the Gospel parables, there is one which gives us an idea of the sufferings of the damned. A rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, fared sumptuously every day, whilst a poor beggar, named Lazarus, remained lying at his door, unheeded by any one. He was not even

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permitted to pick up the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; it was only the dogs who, moved by a sort of compassion that might make men ashamed, came and licked his sores. This poor man died, and the Angels carried his soul to Abraham's bosom, that is to say, to heaven. The rich man likewise died soon after, but he was buried in hell. God permitted that one day, raising his eyes towards heaven, he saw afar off the patriarch Abraham, and the poor man he had formerly known at the gate of his palace. "Father Abraham," cried he in a tone of supplication, "have pity on me; send Lazarus, that he may dip his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am grievously tormented in these flames." "Son," replied Abraham, "remember that you in your lifetime enjoyed good things, whilst Lazarus had only evil things; for that reason it is that he is now in bliss, and you in suffering. Moreover, there is a gulf between us, as you see, so that no one can go hence to you, or from you hither." "At least, Father Abraham, send to the earth to warn my five brothers who are still alive, that they may not fall into this place of torment." "But," answered Abraham, "they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." "No, no, Father Abraham, I am sure they will do penance if one from the dead goes to them." "I do not think so, my son; if they hear not Moses, or the prophets, neither will they believe one who goes to them from the dead." Let this parable serve for our instruction, my dear children; let us not forget these useless lamentations of the rich

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man, which are those of all the damned.—*St. Luke*, Chap. XVI.

185. *Something About Hell.*—How imperfect soever may be the description sometimes given of hell, it is very capable of making those reflect who seriously dwell upon it. At the beginning of the second century, there lived at Heliopolis, in Sicily, a young person named Eudoxia, who led a very irregular and scandalous life. One day, a priest, who was called Germanus passing through that city, came to lodge with Eudoxia's parents, because they were Christians. At midnight he arose to say some particular prayers and recite the Office of the Church. It so happened that there was in the office for that day a description of the torments of hell, and the excruciating sufferings of the damned. As the good priest recited it aloud, Eudoxia, whose chamber was adjacent to his, heard the greater part of it. The silence of the night, the profound darkness, the hushed repose of all nature and especially the grace of God, which touched her heart, suddenly effected an extraordinary change within her. She began to reflect on her evil doings, and on the eternal torments which were to be the inevitable consequence, if she did not change her life. Scarcely had the day appeared, when she rose and went in search of the strange priest, to inform him of her resolution. He confirmed her, as may be supposed, in her good dispositions, gave her some profitable advice, and promised that if she were faithful, God would forgive her her sins. "I regret,"

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added the pious traveller, "being obliged to depart so soon, but you will go and have yourself instructed by one of the priests of this city, who will baptize you, and all your sins shall be effaced and forgotten. Eudoxia followed his advice, and had the happiness of being martyred about the year 114. It is well to recall here to our minds those words of the Holy Ghost: "Remember thy last end, and thou wilt never sin."—BOLLANDUS, *Act. Sanc.*, 1st March.

186. *Our Fire and that of Hell.*—Of all the torments endured in hell, my young friends, that which seems to make the most impression on us, to cause us the most terror, is fire. We know the activity of fire, but ours is nothing to that which shall burn the damned for all eternity, without consuming them. I have read, in the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert, that a holy solitary named Martinian, had already passed some twenty-five years in a most austere retreat. His virtue was much extolled. A wicked woman named Zoe, said one day before some persons: "Bah! I have no faith in his virtue, and I will engage to make him do whatsoever I desire." She dresses herself in her finest apparel, over which she puts on some tattered rags, takes some provisions, and sets out for the desert where dwelt the holy hermit. It was late at night when she reached his cell, and she told him she had lost her way and must crave his hospitality for the night. Martinian was touched, gave up his cell to her, and passed the night outside. Next morning the wretch strips off

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her rags, reappears before the solitary, and shamelessly urges him to offend God, telling him that no one would know anything of it. Martinian hesitates a moment how to answer, but all at once he tells Zoe to wait a few moments. He retires to a corner of his cell, heaps up wood and kindles a great fire; then, taking off his sandals, he sits down on the ground and puts his two feet in the fire. The pain soon makes him cry aloud; the temptress runs in, and starts back in terror. Martinian took occasion from this circumstance to exclaim several times: "Alas! if I cannot bear this fire for some minutes, how shall I bear the fire of hell for all eternity?" Zoe was so touched by this reflection, that she changed her life and became a saint. Let us also profit by this reflection, my dear friends, and carefully avoid sin, which can alone lead us to hell.—MARIN, *Vie des Peres des deserts.*

187. *St. Teresa's Hell.*—What is hell? Alas! dear friends, I wish I could only give you a just idea of it: I prefer, however, to let a saint speak. St. Teresa being one day in prayer, God permitted her to get a sight of the place which the devils had prepared for her in hell. She thought herself, then, transported for a moment to that place of torments, without knowing how it happened. The entrance appeared to her like that of a very small oven, very narrow, and very dark; the bottom of it was nothing but filthy mud, emitting an insupportable stench, and full of venomous reptiles. She saw herself lodged in a hollow made like a niche in the wall. "There," said

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she, "I felt my soul burned by a fire so horrible, that I could scarcely describe it as it was, since I could not even conceive it. I have experienced in the course of my life torments, which, according to physicians, are the greatest that can be endured, by the contraction of the nerves and in many other ways; but all those pains were as nothing in comparison to what I then suffered. And even that is little if we compare it to the agony of the soul. It seems as though it were stifled, choking; and its affliction and despair exceed all description .... As to that fire and that despair which are the acme of so many horrible torments, I confess myself still less able to represent them. I know not who made me endure them, but I felt myself burning, and, as it were, hacked in a thousand pieces." The saint, writing, six years after, of what she had suffered in that frightful prison, was so terrified by the recollection, that it seemed as though the blood froze in her veins. "So," she adds, "whatever ills or pains I suffer now, I cannot remember what I suffered then, without deeming all one can endure here below as of no account whatever. To burn in this world is nothing, compared with burning in the other." There are her own words, and yet God showed her only the image of a portion of hell; from which it may be inferred that, in all its reality, it is a thousand times worse than this horrible picture; nothing can give one any exact idea of it.—NOEL, *Cat de Rodez*, II., 329.

188. *What the Devil would do to see God.*—It seems

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to us that the greatest torment of hell is the intelligent fire which devours the unhappy reprobates. We are mistaken. The most excruciating of all, the most intolerable for the human soul, is being deprived of seeing God, and the thought of being forever deprived of Him. This is what is called the pain of loss. I have read, I believe in the works of Father Surin, a learned theologian of the seventeenth century, a curious fact in relation to that. It happened in 1634, at London, in the diocese of Poictiers; several persons possessed of the devil were exorcised, and the priest who performed that difficult task sometimes interrogated the evil spirit on questions of great interest. One day he said to him: "In the name of God, I command you to tell me, what pains are suffered in hell?" "Alas! we suffer a fire which is never extinguished, an eternal malediction, and especially a rage, a despair impossible to describe, because we can never contemplate Him who created us, and whom we have lost by our own fault." "What wouldst thou do, to enjoy the sight of God, were such a think possible?" "Oh! if God could permit it, I would consent with all my heart to climb a pillar that would reach to heaven, were it all over bristling with sharp points, keen edges, piercing thorns; I would consent besides to suffer ten thousand years, only to have the happiness of beholding God for a single moment. Ah! if men knew what they lose, in losing the grace of God!" Such was the reply of the Devil, and surely he ought to know, my dear friends, he who has been

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the enemy of God and inhabiting hell for so many ages.—Guillois, *Explic. du Cat.*, 95—G. S. G.

189. *The Will of a Reprobate Sinner.*—How clearly we see things at the hour of death! Ah! my dear friends, why do we not, then, reflect a little more during life on our eternal interests? Hear a story which is very fit to make any one shudder who has even a little faith. A father of a family, whose name charity does not permit me to tell you, had unhappily employed all sorts of means, good and bad, to enrich himself. He lived in Italy, and practised exteriorly the duties of religion; but that did not prevent him from cheating and extorting in business, without ever thinking of making restitution. When he felt that he had but a little time to live, he sent for a notary to make his will. He commenced in these terms: "*This is my last will and testament. I leave my soul to the Devil!*" At these words the pen fell from the notary's hand; every one present shuddered with horror, and cried: "Poor man! he is out of his mind." "No, I am not out of my mind," replied the dying man; "write what I dictate: '*I leave my soul to the Devil, to carry it to hell, because of the robberies I have committed. I give also to the Devil the soul of my wife, who encouraged me to rob. I furthermore give to the Devil the souls of my children, who profited by my robberies.*'" He added several other imprecations no less horrible, and ended by expiring in the most frightful rage and despair, leaving to all the witnesses of this awful scene a lesson they never for-

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got. Let us not forget it either, my dear children, for, as St. Paul says, *it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*—Abbe Favre, *Le Ciel Ouvert*, 112.

IV.—ETERNITY.

190. *Thomas More's Twenty Years.*—In 1534 the unhappy Henry VIII., King of England, had plunged his States into disorder by his schism. He hoped to find in all his subjects the same docility he had met in some wretches without morals and without conscience. He was mistaken. Among those who had the courage to resist him, history loves to cherish the name of Thomas More, High Chancellor of England. The tyrant had him despoiled of all he possessed and thrown into a gloomy prison; but he did not succeed in disturbing the peace which reigned in his soul. Some perfidious friends tried, one day, to reason with him: "How can you be so blind and obstinate," said they, "as to maintain an opinion contrary to that of almost every member of Parliament? It is madness, for surely you alone have not more intelligence than all these gentlemen put together?" "I am not alone in my opinion," answered Thomas; "my opinion is that of the whole Church, spread throughout France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the entire world." But the best answer made by him on this occasion was as follows: His wife had the weakness to try to tempt him. She came to visit him in his

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prison and besought him to regain the king's favor by doing as he desired. "Then," added she, "we shall have the consolation of having you with us for a long time to come." "And how many years longer, wife, do you think I could live?" "At least twenty years yet." "Twenty years!" repeated the heroic chancellor, "twenty years! and, Madam, would you have me barter an eternity of happiness for twenty years of a troubled and dishonored old age? I would not gain by the exchange." Some days after, my young friends, Thomas More died a martyr on the scaffold, and commenced that eternity of happiness which they would have had him sacrifice for twenty miserable years.—PILASSIER, *Dict. Hist. d'Education*, II., 652.

191. *Father Argentan's Comparison.*—It is difficult, and even impossible, my young friends, for a mind so limited as that of man to form a just idea of eternity. Still we may, by means of certain comparisons, arrive at something formidable enough for the imagination. Father Argentan makes the following supposition to a damned soul: "If the justice of God told thee: 'I am going to fill the whole universe to the height of the sun with little grains of sand, which you are to carry to another world that I will show thee. Thou shalt not carry them in a sack, nor even by handfuls, but grain by grain. Thou shalt not even be at liberty to take them one after the other, without interruption; on the contrary, thou shalt suffer a thousand years between each journey. Thus, after having removed the first grain of sand, thou shalt remain a whole

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thousand years in hell; then thou shalt carry the second, after that, another thousand years; after the third, the same torments; and when thou shalt have removed all those millions of grains of sand, thy torments shall end.' Well, wouldst thou accept those conditions?" "Praise the Lord, yes, yes, I would willingly accept them, for it would seem to me as though I already saw the end of my pains." "How! the end of thy pains! think what thou sayest, unhappy soul!" "I do think of it and know well what I say, for what is a duration which is one day to end compared with an eternity that will never end?" The reflection was wise and true, my friends; let us never forget it, and our salvation is secure.—FATHER ARGENTAN, *Conférences sur les grandeurs de Dieu*, I., 293.

192. *When Shall Eternity End?*—The celebrated Joseph Dominick Mansi, one of the most learned men of his age and of all Italy, had not always led a very regular life. He had commenced by being a notary. One day, being obliged to go to a house where he had probably some will to make, he passed a church where a sermon was being preached. Impelled by curiosity, he entered and soon perceived that the preacher had taken for his subject the eternity of the torments of the damned. From time to time he paused, and electrified his audience by crying out: "*O Eternity that shall never end!*" The tone in which he pronounced these words produced an extraordinary effect on Mansi. He left the church absorbed in thought and

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went on his way; only now and then he stopped, and repeated to himself: "O Eternity that shall never end!" Returning to his house, just as he was about to sit down to table, an interior voice seemed to repeat the same words in his ear: "O Eternity that shall never end!" By night, as well as by day, alike at prayer, and at business, that important sentence sounded in his ear and occupied his mind. Touched, at length, by this celestial warning, he left the world, became a priest, and died archbishop of Lucca, in Italy, in 1769. Let this reflection influence us, too, my dear children, for life is very short, whilst *eternity shall never end.*—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 569.

193. *Father Croiset's Ant.*—In regard to comparisons that may give us some idea of the immeasurable duration of eternity, there is none that has struck me so much as the following. By constant rubbing, earth, stone, and even iron is at last worn away; but what time it would take to wear away a rock, an entire mountain, by rubbing it merely with the finger! Well! if a damned soul were told: "God is going to change into steel the earth with all that composes it, such as stones, trees, rocks, mountains, &c.; He will afterwards permit an ant to come once every hundred years on that enormous globe of polished steel, and when that little animal shall have succeeded in wearing it all away, merely by passing over it, eternity shall be ended." Can you even imagine the millions of ages it would take that ant to wear away even the thickness of a knife-blade? And what is a

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knife-blade to the thickness of a mountain? to the whole earth? Well! my dear children, if one said to a damned soul: "When that incredible task shall have been finished by the ant, your eternity shall be ended," it would be a mistake: its eternity would be only commencing! Ah! well might the Holy Ghost say: "Think of thy last end, and thou shalt never sin."—PERE CROISET, *Christian Year*, Month of August, 195.

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SECOND PART.

ON DUTIES WHICH MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED.

CHAPTER I.

COMMANDMENTS OF GOD IN GENERAL.

194. *Promulgation of the Law of God on Mount Sinai.*—Do you remember, my dear children, the manner in which your Sacred History relates the proclamation of the law of God on Mount Sinai, in Arabia? On the day fixed for that solemn promulgation, all the people of Israel were encamped at the foot of the mountain, at a distance prescribed beforehand. No one was to cross the boundary marked by God himself. All at once, just as the light of the rising sun began to overspread the earth, the holy mountain was seen covered with a dense cloud, from the midst of which came forth lightning and thunder, that struck the people with salutary fear and respect. To the pealing of the thunder was joined the sound of a trumpet, heard even at a great distance. The Lord, says the Scripture, manifested himself on the

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top of the mountain; He called Moses, who advanced alone with Aaron. Moses was ordered, nevertheless, to ascend higher than Aaron, and to enter without fear into the midst of the thunder and lightning that pealed over Sinai. The priests and the entire people, men, women, and children, remained at a distance, but they clearly distinguished all that the Lord said to Moses. It was then that He pronounced those beautiful words, which are the summary of his law and which are called the Decalogue or Ten Commandments of God: *I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me, thou shalt not make to thyself graven images to adore and serve them*, &c. You know these commandments by heart, my dear children, so it would be useless for me to repeat them at length. The principal thing is not to know them word by word, but to practise them to the letter, if we would be sharers in the magnificent rewards which God has attached to them.—*Exodus*, Chapters XIX. and XX.

195. *Story of Little Nilus.*—How happy you are, dear children, in having begun so early to serve God! Let me tell you on that subject what was done by a young man who afterwards became a great saint. He was called Nilus, and was born in Palestine, in the fifth century. He had received, like you, a Christian education, and distinguished himself in his studies. As he had much talent, and was of prepossessing appearance, false friends advised him to live in the

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world and enjoy the pleasures it affords. Nilus had the misfortune to follow their suggestions; little by little he forgot his good principles, formed bad connections, and finally became very corrupt. Nevertheless, the remembrance of his last end made him re-enter into himself, and he felt all the danger of his position. "I am lost," said he within himself, "I am lost if I continue in this unhappy state. Come! I must be converted; and to prove to God that I wish henceforward to love and serve Him with fidelity, I will consecrate myself to Him, either in the solitary life, or in the religious state." So Nilus quitted the world without a moment's delay, and set out for the desert. As he journeyed along, he met a Saracen who abruptly accosted him, asking him who he was, whence he came, and whither he was going. The good young man simply told him his intention. "How!" said the barbarian, much astonished, "you would quit the world at your age! Why, with your appearance, and the wealth you possess, you are very wrong to consecrate yourself so young to your God. Were I in your place, I would wait till I was far advanced in years." "What! you would have me wait till I was old and decrepid to be faithful to my God! Could such a sacrifice be acceptable to Him? One must, indeed, have no heart to treat him so unworthily. On the contrary, nothing is more pleasing to Him than the honor we pay Him in our youth; and hence it is that, grieved for having been so long unfaithful to Him, I hasten to give myself entirely to His service." The

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Saracen was so struck by this wise reflection that he admired the young Nilus, and was the first to encourage him to carry out his generous project.—Keyre, *Anec. Chret.*, 64.

196. *A Blameless Old Savage.*—Savages who know not God shall be saved, my friends, if they faithfully observe the natural law, that is to say, that which God has engraved on the heart of every human being. It is very easily told: "*Do unto others as you would wish that others should do unto you.*" Two missionaries were travelling in North America; one of them, instead of following the usual way, felt himself inspired to plunge into a thick and almost impenetrable wood. His companion strove to persuade him that he was going astray, but he would not change his purpose, and both entered the wood, without knowing whither it led. After walking some time on a venture, they arrived at a cottage made of branches and trunks of trees. They entered. What was their surprise to find within a poor old man lying on dry leaves and almost dying! One of the missionaries asked him in the Indian language what was the matter with him, what he was doing there, and whether he knew the God that created him. "No," replied the good old man, "I do not know Him, but I would wish to know Him." "It was He, then, who sent us to you that we may make Him known to you. But, tell me, have you not killed many men, like all the other savages of your country?" "I never killed any one; I would not wish that any one should take

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my life, so I must not take another's life." "Have you not sometimes stolen a bow, or arrows, some clothes or provisions that belonged to some one else?" "No, I have never stolen anything, because I would not that any one should steal from me." "You have, perhaps, lied?" "What is lying?" "It is saying knowingly the contrary of what is." "Then, I have never lied; when I question others, I wish that they should tell me the truth; I am therefore bound to do the same myself." The Father went over thus in review the principal points of the natural law, and he had the satisfaction of seeing that the good savage had never offended God, at least mortally. He instructed him, then, in the mysteries of our holy religion, and asked him if he wished to be baptized. "I do," said the old man, "I now await but that to die and go see the Great Spirit." He died, in fact, some days after, in great sentiments of fervor.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, VII., 210.

197. *Father Bonaventure's Stories.*—Those who violate the commandments of God, that is to say, those who commit sin, are never happy, my good young friends! If they sometimes prosper for a time, it does not last long; and, even though they might be happy during their whole life, they shall be unhappy for all eternity. I remember having read in a little book entitled *A Little Memento of the Retreat*, the following story: An old laborer, who was commonly called *father Bonaventure*, was fond of sitting in the sun to recruit his strength exhausted by age. He was

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also fond of chatting, and relating former occurrences of which he had been the witness. It was a pleasure to hear him talk of the great Revolution, of Napoleon the First, whom he always called *the Emperor*, of the Russian campaign, and, finally, of the Allies, whom he always designated under the name of *Cossacks*. It was from this habit of telling stories that he came to be called *father Bonaventure*. One day, a dozen or so of little children were frisking around him, prattling in childish glee, and amusing themselves with the noisy sports of their age. All at once the eldest amongst them cries out: "A story! a story! father Bonaventure, tell us a story!" And all the children repeat "That's it,—a story!" And they seat themselves in a circle round the old soldier of the Empire. "Children," said the good old man, "I am very old; see, I have scarcely a hair on my head. Well! during my long career, I have remarked five things; try to remember them, and you will be happy, I promise you, on the faith and word of an honest man: 1. Working on Sunday never made any one the richer. 2. Stolen or ill-gotten goods have never profited any one. 3. Giving alms has never made any one poorer. 4. Morning and evening prayers have never delayed work. 5. A disobedient and unruly child has never prospered." And I, too, my dear children, will recommend to you these five things, and I promise you, in the name of God, happiness in this life and in the other, if you are really faithful to them.—G. S. G.

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198. *A Nobleman's Two Stewards.*—Amongst the parables which I have read, the following, my young friends, appears to me of a nature to interest you. It is about a rich lord who had two stewards. Each of them rivalled the other in devotion to him, and knew not how to testify their love. They assured him, with the most solemn and sacred protestations, that their fidelity to him should never be found wanting. Nevertheless, wishing to try the sincerity of their zeal and devotion, this lord said one day: "I am about to set out on a long journey. During my absence, you shall watch carefully over my treasures. I give each of you a certain part to take care of. Be faithful and vigilant, and on my return, I will reward each of you according to your deserts." As soon as he was gone, they both resolved to obey his orders punctually. Each of them shut up in a little box the money he had received. A short time after the departure of their lord, there came three of his enemies who did all they could to persuade his servants to disobey his orders. "How!" said they, "would you be the fools not to profit by the favorable opportunity you have of enjoying yourselves? Come with us, we have a friendly meeting to-day where you shall have all sorts of pleasure." The younger of the two stewards, with the thoughtlessness of his age, suffered himself to be persuaded. He went off, carrying with him the treasure that had been given him in charge, hoping to discharge his duty by taking care of it, whilst enjoying the promised pleasures. As for the

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elder, he strenuously opposed his going; but all his persuasions and remonstrances were vain, go the other would. The elder remained in the house, continuing to watch faithfully over his deposit, whilst the younger drank and caroused with his gay companions, and appeared at the height of happiness. This state of things lasted some time; but it so happened that the lord returned home unexpectedly in the very middle of the night. Having found the elder of his two stewards engaged in watching over his treasure, he rewarded him as he deserved; then he sent a messenger in search of the other, who was much surprised on hearing of the sudden arrival of his lord. His first thought was to take the treasure he had brought with him and set out at once. Alas! the money had disappeared, and was nowhere to be found. His three seducers had secretly possessed themselves of it, whilst he was only thinking of enjoying himself. You may easily judge, my dear children, how he was received and treated by his master. This parable shows the position of each of us with regard to the commandments of God: if we have been faithful to them when He comes, He will reward us with eternal happiness; in the other case, the fate of the unfaithful servant is reserved for us.—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 11.

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CHAPTER II.

FIRST COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other gods before me.

I.—ON FAITH.

199. *The Officers of Constantius Chloris.*—It is so beautiful, so glorious, so worthy of a generous heart to remain true to its faith, that the pagans themselves could not help admiring courageous Christians, and despising the apostates who abandoned their religion for the sake of gain. Constantius Chloris, a Roman emperor who resided in the Gauls, esteemed and protected Christianity, although he was himself an idolater. Nevertheless, he sometimes made use of dissimulation; he even declared publicly, on a certain day, that all the Christians of his palace should have to offer sacrifice to Jupiter and the other divinities of the Roman people, if they wished to retain their offices and keep in his favor. There were, unhappily, some who, preferring their temporal fortune to their eternal interests, hastened to obey this order, which had been given only to try them. But, in return for their impious obedience, they obtained

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only the emperor's contempt; disgusted by their baseness, he discarded them forever from his household. One of his confidants having asked him the reason of this conduct, at which he was surprised, Constantius made him this wise answer: "Men who sacrifice their religion to their interests, are likely to fail in all their other duties; I could not hope that they would be more faithful to their prince than they had been to their God." Not satisfied with having thus humbled and punished the apostates, Constantius thought himself bound to reward publicly those Christians who, raising themselves above temporal views, had persevered in the open profession of their holy religion. Wherefore, in order to convince his courtiers that he reckoned only on the fidelity of those who remained faithful to their God, he confided to those generous and incorruptible Christians the care of his person and his States.—Abbé Reyre, *Anecdotes Chrétiennes.*

200. *Misplaced Jests of St. Augustine.*—Let us beware of ever jesting on the sacred truths which religion teaches us. St. Augustine, my young friends, deplores the misfortune he had had himself in not being sufficiently careful in this respect, at the time of his first wanderings in error. He relates that he had known, at Tagastum, his native city, a young man of his own age, with whom he contracted a close friendship. But, instead of being advantageous to them, this friendship had unhappily turned to their ruin, especially as regarded the other young man, who was,

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at bottom, less depraved than Augustine. It had scarcely continued a year when he fell ill. St Augustine spent several days at his bedside and witnessed the progress of his malady. The fever was consuming him slowly, when he was taken with a cold sweat, which was thought to be the forerunner of death. They availed themselves of it to give him baptism, for which he had been some time preparing. God permitted that he recovered his health. Augustine, full of joy for his recovery, must needs begin to rally him on the baptism he had received during his illness. "I hope," said he, "that it will not make any change in our former way of living." "What say you?" cried the young man eagerly; "you horrify me, dear Augustine! What! is it you that speak to me in such terms? If you would still continue my friend, I beg that you will never again allow yourself to utter even the slightest jest on the sacred mysteries of religion." This useful lesson was not lost on St. Augustine, who made many serious reflections on the subject; but his reflections were more serious still, when he learned some days after that his friend had had a relapse and was dead. This event was one of those which prepared the way for his final conversion. —St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book IV., Chapter 4.

201. *A Woman Cured by Faith.*—Our Lord tells us that if we had faith only the size of a grain of mustard seed, we should do incredible wonders. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyr, in Syria, relates, on this subject, that he had known a man, named Peter who

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wrought marvels of this kind. A poor woman, afflicted with sore eyes, came one day to this worthy man, so pious and so God-fearing, and besought him to cure her. "Cure you!" said he, "why, I am only a poor sinner, and a man like me has not faith enough to work miracles." "I beseech you, Peter, if you will, you can cure me."—"You are wrong, my good woman; it is of God you must ask that favor; He always hears the prayers of those who address themselves to Him in faith and trust." The poor woman persisted still the more, because it seemed to her, what was really the case, that the more Peter excused himself from praying for her, the more he proved that he was a saint and a man of faith. Overcome at length by the poor woman's entreaties, he said to her: "If your faith be sincere, if you have no doubt in your mind, receive this cure, which comes from God." And so saying, he laid his hand on her eyes, said a short prayer within himself, and made the sign of the cross over the patient. At the same moment her malady disappeared. There is faith, my dear friends, and there are the works it can operate when it is strong and sincere.—SCHMID et BELET.—*Cat. Hist.*, I., 130.

202. *Are the Commandments Impracticable?*—It is no uncommon thing to find people who are fond of dogmatizing on religion; and what errors and absurdities they advance on that subject! Nothing is easier at times than to refute them by their own words. A young man was present one evening in

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a numerous company, where they were exclaiming against the miracles, mysteries, and other truths of religion. He took upon him to reply: he quoted to these skeptics the testimonies and admissions of the very enemies of Catholicity. He particularly mentioned Celsus, Porphyrus, and the famous Julian the Apostate, who all admit the truth of the miracles of Jesus Christ and His Apostles. Neither did he forget Voltaire, Jean Jacques, Rousseau, Diderot and the philosophers of the last century, who have rendered at times such splendid testimony to our holy religion. Strange to say, all his learning was thrown away; the gentlemen believed in nothing. He then employed a singular means of forcing them to render homage to the truth in spite of themselves. "I see well, gentlemen," said he, "that you do not give in even to the authority and example of your masters; you will, at least, grant me one thing: is it not true that our dogmas are hard to believe, our commandments hard to practise?" "Difficult!" they all cried at once, "say rather they are impossible." "But if they are impossible, gentlemen, how comes it that they have been believed, and practised throughout the earth? How is it that the Gospel has counted disciples in all conditions, in the palaces of kings, in the academies of the learned, in the midst of the most civilized cities, and that even when all who were known to be Christians were sacrificed without pity?" To this reasoning, so simple and so true, our rationalists had not a word to answer, and the cour-

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ageous champion of the faith and of religion remained sole master of the field.—Guillois, *Nouvelle Explic. du Cat.*, 32.

293. *The Confession of Two Unbelieving Deputies.*—People sometimes imagine that it is very easy to believe nothing, and to get rid, as they say, of the beliefs and the prejudices of their youth. Alas! those who have tried to do so have confessed many sad things in that regard. In 1820, two of the most celebrated men of France, both members of the Chamber of Deputies, and, I believe, members also of the French Academy, furnish a proof of this. M. Viennet said one day to Benjamin Constant: "I am very unhappy in believing nothing; oh! if I had children, I would preserve them from that misfortune, by having them brought up Christians; I would put them in a Jesuit College." "Well!" replied Benjamin Constant, "I am just like you; I no longer believe anything, and that fatigues me; I would rather believe in something, but I believe in nothing, and it is truly a torment to me." Is it not true, my young friends, that these confessions are very valuable, especially when they come from men so exalted in public opinion, the one as an academician, the other as an eminent writer? It recalls to our minds the words of Montesquieu, who had likewise the misfortune of being an unbeliever. "It is a marvellous thing," said he, "that the Christian religion, which seems to have for its sole object our felicity in the other life,

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makes also our happiness in this."—GUILLOIS, *Explic. du Cat.*, 114.

204. *A Church Built by a Norman Soldier.*—When one has faith, my young friends, they prove it by their works, and especially by their zeal for all that belongs to religion. A dozen years since, a poor conscript left Lower Normandy. He was very sad: fate had dealt hardly with him, he had no means to obtain a substitute, and he left his aged parents in want and misery. When his term of service expired he hastened to revisit his native place. But a great change had taken place in his old home: his father and mother were no more; death had been there. . . . His first thought was to pray at their grave. Alas! what does he behold in the cemetery? A church in ruins, tottering walls, and a crazy roof through which the rain penetrates; it was in such a state that the bishop had been forced to remove the pastor of the village. At this sight, the worthy man's sorrow was doubly renewed; he falls on his knees beside the grave of his parents, he prays, he weeps, he begs of God the means of repairing this sad desolation. Next day he arms himself with great courage, and goes from door to door to ask alms for the church; but the country is poor, and his collection did not amount to much. Then he takes a heroic resolution; he says to himself: "I will go and sell myself for our church; all the money I receive shall be for it." And he did sell himself, that is to say, he re-enlisted in the army. But what was the result? Why, that the

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church was repaired, and the pastor returned to the village. The soldier's good conduct obtained for him a mission of trust to which some emoluments were attached. As soon as he had saved a small sum, he bought linen, ornaments, flowers, candlesticks, and was happy in sending from time to time some new things to his dear little church. Thus it happened that a poor Norman conscript, without money, without resources, but with great faith and sincere piety, had the church repaired, the pastor brought back, and religion made to flourish again in his native village.—Abbe Mullois, *Mois de Marie de tout le monde*, 47.

II.—ON HOPE.

205. *The Despair of Judas.*—Let us have committed what sins we may, dear friends, we ought never to despair. Despair is more injurious to the goodness of God than are the most atrocious crimes to His justice, because God wills not the death of the sinner; He wills, on the contrary, that he may be converted and live. Of that I find a proof in the history of Judas. He was, as you know, one of the twelve Apostles. He had the misfortune to let himself be seduced by the bait of money, and he went so far as to sell Jesus Christ, his good Master, for the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver. But his greatest crime was despair. Our Lord did all He could to bring him back to better sentiments: He embraced him tenderly,

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He gave him the sweet name of friend, He made him understand that his guilty project was known to him; He even distributed to him, like the other Apostles, His adorable body and blood in the Last Supper. Blinded by his passion, Judas resisted these marks of kindness, and became more and more hardened. Nevertheless, when he saw that the Jews did not content themselves with arresting Jesus in the Garden of Olives, but abused and outraged Him in every way, and were preparing to put Him to death, then, says the Gospel, he repented. He even brought back the money which he had received, and gave it to the chief priests and the ancients, saying: "I have sinned, in betraying innocent blood." But they answered: "What is that to us? Look thou to it." Judas, seeing himself despised even by those who had encouraged him to commit the crime, threw the thirty pieces on the floor of the temple of Jerusalem, and went away. It was then that he should have run to the place where his Divine Master was, to express his contrition, and ask forgiveness—instead of that, believing that he could never obtain pardon for his crime, he went to a retired place and hung himself from a tree. His body burst open, so that his bowels were scattered on the ground, and he expired miserably; sad consequence of his despair.—*St. Matthew*, 3; Acts of the Apostles, I., 16.

206. *The Mother of St. Symphorian.*—One of the finest examples of Christian hope, and the strength which it gives in sufferings, is that of St. Symphorian,

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a noble and learned young man, martyred at Autun, about the year 179. One day a procession was held in that city in honor of Cybele, a goddess much reverenced by the pagans. Symphorian happened to be in a place by which the procession was to pass; but, instead of adoring the statue, which was borne in triumph on a car, he testified all the contempt he felt for that impious and sacrilegious worship. He was arrested and dragged before Heraclius, governor of the city, who asked him who he was, and urged him to change his opinion. "I am a Christian," energetically answered the young man, "and I adore no idols." After a long interrogation, in which he manifested his faith and his trust in God, he was condemned to be beheaded, in his quality of Roman citizen. Whilst they were conducting him to the place of execution, his pious mother ran to meet him, and the better to make herself heard by him, mounted the ramparts of the city, in the neighborhood of the gate, then called the Langres, and now the St. Andrew's Gate. Thence she exhorted him to persevere in his glorious martyrdom. "My son, Symphorian my son, do not lose sight of the God for whom you are going to die; let Him be always in your thoughts. Courage, my son! death is not to be feared, when it must open to us the gates of life. To-day they do not take away your life, but change it to another infinitely better. . ." These last words have been deemed so fine, that the church has inserted them in the Preface of the Mass for the Dead:

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"*Vita mutatur, non tollitur;* life is not taken away but changed." When the young Christian hero had arrived outside the walls of Autun, he courageously consummated his martyrdom: the executioner cut off his head.—D. RUINART, *Veritable Actes des Martyrs*, I., 135.

207. *The Three Words of a Presumptuous Sinner.* —We must, undoubtedly, trust in God, my young friends, but we must not presume on His goodness. How many persons who imagined that they should have the time and the means of being converted, have been the sad victims of their rash presumption! Of this number was a gentleman of London, who lived in the reign of Henry VIII. The famous Chancellor of England, Sir Thomas More, who was as good a Christian as he was a distinguished magistrate, was exhorting this gentleman to leave off his evil ways and do penance. "Oh! pray, do not trouble yourself on my account," answered the fool; "you see, I have three words that will suffice to obtain my pardon at the hour of death, and in the moment of danger." "And what are those three so powerful words?" "Those three words are: '*Lord, forgive me!*'" It was no use trying to convince him that he did wrong in trusting to so small a thing, and that God only forgives those who have done all the penance they could; he continued his evil courses and his foolish scoffing. One day when he was out riding, he had to cross a bridge; his horse taking fright jumps over the parapet and casts himself into the waves with the

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unfortunate rider. That was the moment for pronouncing his three words; alas! he had only time to say three others very different; he cried: "*May the Devil . . . .*" and disappeared beneath the waters, leaving all who had known him terrified for his fate in eternity.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*

208. *A Lady Lost by Her Scruples.*—It is not always great crimes that may urge us to despair; simple scruples, my young friends, may sometimes produce that deplorable result, when we do not leave ourselves to the entire guidance of our spiritual director. A missionary of Savoy, the Abbe Favre, relates an instance of the kind of which he had himself been the witness. A very pious young lady was much tormented by horrible temptations and by bad thoughts. Very far from consenting to them she did all she could to reject and resist them; nevertheless, the devil put it in her head that she had consented to them, and succeeded in making her believe it. She imagined, then, that she fell every day into great sins, and that she committed a sacrilege every time she approached the Holy Table. This state tormented her so much the more that she was sincerely virtuous, and had really a horror of sin. She confessed at least weekly, and never failed to speak of her troubles to her confessor. The latter, who was a very enlightened man, tried to make her understand that it was an artifice of the devil, who was seeking to destroy her by that means. He exhorted her to omit none of her practices of piety, and especially to continue

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her usual communions. "But, father, it seems to me that I commit a horrible sacrilege every time." "No, my daughter, that is not possible; since you have a horror of sin and of sacrilege, it is a proof that you commit none." All he could say was useless, she would have her own way. What followed? She fell ill; the devil, who had succeeded in deceiving her so long, continued to delude her; he made her believe more than ever that she had almost always lived in mortal sin, and that she could not fail to be damned. In this fatal notion the unhappy girl refused the last sacraments, would not confess, repulsed even her pastor, and died in frightful despair. There, my poor children, is what it is to lose confidence in God, and not to listen to those who are charged with our guidance.—Abbe Favre, *le Ciel ouvert*, 49.

209. *A Vessel Saved by a Child of Seven Years.*—There happened some years ago, my young friends, a fine instance of trust in Providence; it is the story of a child of seven years old who saved a vessel from shipwreck. This vessel was sailing on the Baltic Sea. A frightful tempest had beaten it to and fro till the mast was broken and the sails tattered. Every one was in a state of consternation. The Captain himself cried out in a despairing tone: "It is all over! we are lost! the good God seems to be dead!" "No, Captain," exclaimed the little Adolphus, "He is not dead, He is asleep, and He will wake up when it is time." Scarcely had he said these words when a gust of wind more violent than any that had preceded it,

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covered the vessel with yet other fragments and a deluge of water. "We are lost," again cried out the Captain; "prepare all for death; we are going to be buried in the waves." "You are mistaken," said once more the sweet voice of the child," we are not going to perish: Jesus is still with us in the vessel." At that moment, the ship was again lifted up by the waves and seemed on the point of being engulfed forever in the depths of the sea. But Jesus *was* there; and the faith of a child sufficed to save the life of all on board. In fact, the storm soon abated, and the vessel arrived in safety in the harbor of Tenningen. Let us never give way to despair, my dear children, let us say with Job: *Lord, even when Thou didst crush me, I hoped in Thee still.*—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 130.

219. *What Human Glory is.*—The Abbe Mullois, almoner of the Emperor, relates the following fact, which is well adapted to make us reflect. A young man of an obscure family had been destined from early childhood for a military life. One day, in the midst of a murderous engagement, I found him lying exhausted on the ground. I knelt beside him: "You suffer much," said I to him. "Ah! reverend father," said he with a bitter smile, "this is what is called human glory! Seek human glory, and behold where it ends! I know it now by sad experience!" "But all is not lost, Captain," I replied; "you shall be cured, and then a decoration and a superior grade shall reward your services." The young officer only

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answered by making a sign for me to raise the rough covering which had been thrown over him. A splinter from a shell had torn his side, and I saw his intestines protruding from the wound. "It is true," I exclaimed, "that human glory is all over for you, but there is another awaiting the brave soldier who has done his duty. In the other life. . . ." "Father, do not speak to me of that. I will not hear of it." "But, Captain . . . ." "I tell you, do not mention it. I have worked for glory, it has fled me, I shall die in despair." I endeavored, but in vain, to bring the poor young man to more consoling sentiments. His look was frightful, his lips contracted into the form of a smile, a hideous mixture of fury and despair. Soon after he asked me for a soothing potion to enable him to die without too much suffering. With the Major's permission I went to seek it. When I returned to him, he was dead! This unhappy soldier refused the consolations of religion because he had not had the happiness of being brought up Christianly. Bless God, my dear children, who has given you that precious favor.—ABBE MULLOIS, *Mois de Marie de tout le Monde*, 83.

III.—OF CHARITY TOWARDS GOD.

211. *Peter, Lovest Thou Me?*—We ought to love God, my dear friends, but we ought to love Him more than anything whatsoever. St. Peter furnishes a fine example of this. Our Lord had risen, and had

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appeared several times to His Apostles; to some of them He manifested Himself under very peculiar circumstances. One day, St. Peter, St. Thomas, and five other disciples were assembled together; Peter said to them: "I wish to go fishing this evening." "Well, we shall go with you," and they all went into a bark, but they took nothing all the night. Next morning, when they had landed on the shore of Lake Genesareth, Jesus stood amongst them without their knowing Him, doubtless because He appeared to them in the garb of a fisherman. He said to them: "Children, have you nothing to eat?" "No, Lord, for we have taken nothing." "Cast your net on the right side of the bark, and you shall catch some fish." They did so, and the net was filled so that they could scarcely haul it up. St. John, amazed at this prodigy, said in a low voice to St. Peter: "See you not that it is the Lord?" They all landed then, and found on the beach some lighted coals, and some little fish broiling. Jesus then said to them: "Bring hither some of the fishes you have taken." They brought the net to land and counted about one hundred and fifty-three large fishes. When they had dined, no one dared to speak to Jesus. It was He himself who, turning to St. Peter, said: "Peter, lovest thou Me?" "Yea, Lord, I love Thee." "Feed My lambs." He asked him a second time: "Peter, lovest thou Me?" "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." "Feed My lambs." Then, a little while after, He asked a third time: "Peter, lovest thou Me?" St. Peter was touched

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and even grieved by this third question; he exclaimed with all the tenderness and all the energy of which he was capable: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." And Jesus said to him: "Feed My sheep." There is how we ought to love God, dear children; we ought to tell it to Him, and prove it to Him unceasingly by our actions.—*St. John*, Chapter XXI.

212. *How St. Polycarp Loved God.*—All the martyrs proved that they loved God well, since they gave their life for Him. Amongst those noble and generous defenders of religion, I love to quote St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who had had the happiness of knowing St. John, the beloved disciple. He was arrested as a Christian in the year 167 and dragged before the city tribunals. They sought to make him renounce his holy religion, but he remained unshaken. "What harm is it, then," said his judges to him, "to call the Emperor your Lord, and offer a sacrifice to save your life?" "I will not do it." The populace thronging around him, began to cry out: "It is the teacher of Asia, it is the father of the Christians, it is the destroyer of our gods, it is he who has taught so many others to abjure the religion of the State."—"Polycarp, I exhort you once more," said the proconsul, "to obey the Emperor's edicts; come, swear, by the fortune of Cæsar; speak some words against Jesus Christ!"—"How!" indignantly cried the holy bishop, "fourscore years have I served Jesus Christ, and He has never done me any harm,

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on the contrary, He has loaded me with favors, and you would have me speak against Him! Once more, I tell you, I am a Christian—that is my religion!" It is unnecessary to add, my dear friends, that St. Polycarp was martyred some days after. He was cast into a fire, but the flames scattered from about him and respected him; the governor, furious at this new miracle, caused him to be stabbed to the heart with a dagger.—LASSAUSSE, *Explic. du Cat. de l'Empire*, 199.

213. *The Old Robe of St. Aphraates.*—Speaking of the constant charity which we ought to have for God, I will tell you, dear children, the story of St. Aphraates' robe. He was born in Persia, but he became a solitary in the neighborhood of Edessa, in Turkey in Asia. Anthemus, one of the most distinguished men of that period, being ambassador in the Kingdom of Persia, thought to please the saint by bringing him a robe from that country. He came to see him, and presenting him the robe said: "Father, people always love what comes from their own country; here is a robe that was made in your country, and I thought I would give you pleasure by bringing it to you." St. Aphraates took it, laid it aside and spoke of something else. After some time, he said to Anthemus: "My lord, there is one thing that gives me a great deal of trouble." "What is it, father?" "I have an old servant who has served me some sixteen years and to whom I am much attached; now there is another who urges me to take him in place

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of the other, under pretence that he is from my own country. It seems to me that it is too hard to dismiss the one without any fault on his part, but merely to take the other." "You are very right, father; if I were in your place I would do as you do; why, indeed, should you discard him who has long served you faithfully, to take another whom you do not know, simply because he is from your own country?" "That is all I wanted, my lord; take away, then, the robe you have given me, for I have one that has served me sixteen years and is still good · so I cannot leave it off to put on the other." Anthemus admired this witty answer, and confessed that he had nothing to say. This story is very much to our purpose, my young friends! The good God has loved us the first, and He has never done us anything but good, why, then, should we quit His service and depart from Him, to attach ourselves to creatures who are only able to do us harm?—Michel-Ange Marin, *Vie des Peres des deserts*, IX., 220.

214. *Story of Brother Giles.*—It is not hard to love God, my dear children; it suffices to act in all that we do solely to please Him and accomplish His holy will. I remember having read that St. Bonaventure, one of the most learned doctors of the church, had amongst his religious a worthy man named brother Giles, who had no instruction and was extremely simple. One day he said to St. Bonaventure, "My reverend Father, you are very happy, you learned theologians: you can love God much more than we

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can, and work out your salvation much more easily." "You are mistaken, brother Giles, for, with the assistance of grace, every one can love God as much as he will." "What!" exclaimed the good monk, "poor ignorant creatures who can neither read nor write, can love God as perfectly as those who have made studies?" "Why certainly; and, moreover, a poor peasant may sometimes love God more than a learned theologian." At these words good brother Giles feels himself transported with joy, and runs like mad to the garden, opens the door that leads to the street, and begins to cry out as loud as he can: "Hi! poor people, hi! good women who can neither read nor write, come and hear the good news: if you choose you can love the good God as much as a theologian, and even as much as our reverend Father Bonaventure!" This simple exclamation makes you laugh, my dear children, and yet nothing is more true; a wise child, a good pupil, may sometimes love God more than a great person, more even than a learned man, than a doctor of all degrees.—RODRIGUEZ, *Practice of Christian Perfection.*

215. *How St. Vincent de Paul Loved God.*—If we could understand the extent of God's love for us, my dear friends, we would have a little more for Him. One day, St. Vincent de Paul was told that a wretched sinner was giving himself up to despair, because of the multitude of his sins, and obstinately refused to make his confession. He ran to his bedside and told him with his usual zeal: "O my child, you know

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that Christ died for you, and do you doubt His mercy? If you only knew how you wrong Him!" "Let me alone," the wretch replied, "I will die a reprobate just to vex Him." "Well," said St. Vincent, in a tone of authority, "I will snatch you from eternal perdition just to please Him." Thereupon, turning to the witnesses of this struggle between the love of God and the hatred of the sinner, he requests them to say the Rosary. Their prayers were not in vain. The heart of the hardened sinner was all at once softened; he returned to better sentiments, was sincerely converted, confessed to St. Vincent de Paul himself, and died in great sentiments of compunction. It was thus that the love of God triumphed, at the moment when it was least expected.—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 528.

IV.—ON CHARITY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOR.

216. *Story of a Robber Chief.*—When, after the death of the Emperor Domitian, the Apostle St. John returned from the island of Patmos to Ephesus, he visited the adjoining provinces, at the prayer of the faithful, to establish bishops, regulate and form churches, and finally to admit to the clerical order those whom the spirit of God made known to him. Having come, then, to a small town which was not very distant, he established peace among the Christians there, and having cast his eyes on a young man, who was comely and well favored, and by nature

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sprightly and animated, he turned to the bishop and said: "I recommend this young man to you, and I give him to you as a deposit, in presence of the Church of Jesus Christ." The bishop welcomed him kindly, and promised St. John he would take good care of him. He took this young man who had been confided to him, nourished him, kept him under his own guidance, and finally, after due preparation, he baptized him. He afterwards gave him confirmation, then began to not have so much care over him, and not to trouble himself so much about his preservation. So it happened that the youth having had too much of his own way, connected himself with some young fellows of his own age, who thought of nothing but diverting themselves, abandoned themselves to their pleasures and were addicted to all sorts of vices. They first attracted him by banquets, and then prevailed on him to go with them by night to steal some trifling articles; from that they easily led him on to be their accomplice in every crime. Thus he accustomed himself little by little to all sorts of excesses, and in the ardor of his nature, departing once from the right way, like the fiery horse that takes the bit in his teeth, he plunged madly into the abyss of crime. At length, despairing of salvation, he thought only of committing the greatest crimes, and even to exceed all his companions in guilt. With that intention he took with him some men and formed a band of robbers; and as he was bold and fearless, he made himself their chief and became the most

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violent, the most cruel and the most intractable of all. Some time after, it happened that St. John was called to the same city, for the transaction of some business. The holy apostle having arranged the affairs that had brought him thither, said to the bishop: "Now give me back the deposit which Christ and I confided to you, in presence of the flock over which you pre ide." The bishop was at first much surprised, imagining that he was unjustly asked for some money which had not been given him in charge. Then St. John told him that he demanded of him that young man, and the soul of his brother which he had confided to him. But the bishop, casting his eyes down, told him with sighs and tears that he was dead. "How?" said St. John, "and of what death?" "He is dead to God," answered the bishop, "for he has become a reprobate, a lost man, and,—to tell you the worst at once,—a robber; and now, instead of being in the church as formerly, he has taken possession of a mountain, where he dwells with people like himself." The holy apostle, having heard these words, rent his garments, and sighing deeply, he said to the bishop: "Alas! I left in your person a very bad guardian over the soul of your brother. Let me have, at once, a horse, and a guide." Immediately he leaves the church, mounts his horse, and goes in all haste to the place of which they had told him. Having arrived there, he was at once made prisoner by the robber sentinels; he neither attempted to escape, nor asked for mercy, but cried aloud: "I

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came hither to see your captain: take me to him!" They conducted him to their chief, who at first received him arms in hand; but as soon as he had recognized St. John, shame obliged him to fly. The holy apostle pursued him at full speed, forgetting the feebleness of his age and crying out: "My son, why do you shun me? Why fly from your father who is old and without arms? Have pity on me, my son! fear nothing, there is still hope of your salvation! I will answer for you to Jesus Christ; if need be, I will willingly suffer death for you, as Christ suffered for us all; I will give my soul for yours! Stay, stay! it is Christ himself who has sent me to you!" The young man hearing St. John speak in such wise, at length stopped, keeping his eyes on the ground; then he broke his weapon, and filled with contrition, wept bitterly. As he saw that the holy old man was approaching, he went to embrace him; expiating his guilt, as far as might be, by his sighs, and finding as it were a second baptism in his tears; only he hid his right hand, which had been stained with so many crimes. The holy apostle then solemnly swore to him that he would obtain from the Saviour by his prayers the pardon of his sins, and kneeling before him, he kissed that same right hand, as having been purified by the tears of repentance, and led him back to the church. After that, he offered to God, for him, his pious prayers and continual fasts, and soothed his heart by divers words of Scripture; finally, he did not depart thence till he had seen him

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re-established in the Church. This story is related with full particulars by Eusebius of Cesarea.—TILLEMONT, *Hist. Eccles.*, I., 391.

217. *St. John's Last Sermon.*—You are doubtless aware, my good friends, that the Apostle St. John was surnamed *the beloved disciple* because of the very particular affection which Our Divine Lord had for him. But he might also have been styled *the loving apostle*, so great was the charity of his heart. When he had reached the age of 98 or 99 years, he could no longer walk, and had to be carried in a sort of arm-chair to church, or to the assemblies of the faithful. Neither did his great age permit him to make long discourses. Nevertheless, the Christians, who were almost all his disciples, asked him each time to address to them some words of edification. The holy apostle then, mustering all his strength, said to them: "*My children, my little children, love one another!*" He repeated to them almost always the same words. At last, a little tired of hearing nothing else but the one sentence: *Love one another*, his disciples one day took the liberty of asking him why he always repeated the same words to them over and over: "My little children, I repeat always the same thing to you, because, if you love one another, you accomplish all the law of the Lord: all is in that."—FILASSTER, *Dict. Hist., d'Education*, I., p. 381.

218. *St. Martin's Cloak.*—A well-known story, my friends, is that of St. Martin, bishop of Tours. Before being a Christian, he had been a soldier; but,

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desiring to be baptized, he had himself enrolled in the number of the catechumens, and applied himself to practice as well as he could the virtues of the Christians. It is particularly remarked of him that he assisted all in his power those whom he saw in need, reserving to himself, of his pay, only just so much as enabled him to live from day to day, and practising thus the precept of Our Lord in the Gospel, not to be troubling ourselves about the morrow. One day, in the depth of a winter, so severe that year that many persons perished from cold, when there only remained to him his arms and his military uniform, to which belonged a sort of simple cloak, he met at the gate of Amiens a poor man half naked and abandoned by every one. St. Martin believed that Providence had left to him the care of this poor man, on whom no one had compassion. With his sword he cut his cloak in two, and gave the half to the miserable beggar, covering himself with the other half as best he could. This good action appeared so pleasing to Heaven, that, the following night, the charitable soldier had the consolation of seeing in a dream Jesus Christ himself clothed in the half cloak with which he had covered the poor man. He heard that Divine Saviour saying plainly to a multitude of angels who surrounded him: "*It was Martin, who is yet but a catechumen, that covered me with this cloak.*" This vision caused him inexpressible joy, and his sole desire thenceforward was to receive baptism without delay. He was then eighteen years old, and had been already three years enrolled in the

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cavalry.—St. Sulpicius Severus, *Life of St. Martin*, Chapter V.

219. *Incredible Charity of St. Serapion.*—Charity is ingenious, my friends; there is nothing that it will not do to attain its ends. I find a beautiful example of this in the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.* Serapion, surnamed *the Sindonite*, touched by the unhappy state of a pagan comedian, made use, in order to procure his conversion, of a means which displayed on his part much zeal and charity: He sold himself to him as a slave, for the paltry sum of twenty pieces of silver, and carefully seized every opportunity he could find of instructing and edifying him. His discourse and his example at length produced the desired effect; the comedian was converted, with his family, and renounced the theatre. Then he would no longer permit Serapion to be his slave; he set him free through gratitude; but he prevailed upon him to keep for his own use, or, at least for the poor, the twenty pieces of silver he had received on selling himself. Some time after, the Saint sold himself again, in order to put himself in a state to relieve an afflicted widow. His new master was so well pleased with his services that he liberated him. He even made him a present of a tunic, a robe, and a book of Gospels. No sooner had Serapion gone out than he met a poor man, and gave him his robe. A little farther on, a second poor man, half dead with cold, received the tunic, and no clothing remained to the Saint but a wretched piece of stuff. Some one

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having asked him what had become of his clothes,—"There," said he, showing the book of Gospels, "there is what has stripped me." The book itself was not long in his possession, for he sold it in its turn to relieve a destitute person. Thus it was that he carried to the highest degree the pure and beautiful charity which animated him towards his neighbor.—ABBE REYRE, *Anec. Christ.*, 46.

220. *St. John the Almoner's Coverlit.*—One of the bishops who have undoubtedly made themselves most famous by their charities, was St. John the Almoner, patriarch of Alexandria. He had so great a love for the poor, that, in order to be the better able to assist them, he reduced himself to live in extreme poverty. His bed was a wretched pallet, with a tattered woollen coverlit. One of the chief men of the city hearing this, gave him one that cost more than thirty-six francs, and besought him to use it for his sake. He did use it, but the thought of the thirty-six pieces of silver expended for his sole use, whilst they might have relieved many poor persons, tormented him all the night. He kept turning over and over in his mind all the different kinds of wants which that money would have relieved, and he could not close his eyes a single moment. Next morning, he sent and sold the coverlit to give the price of it to the poor. The wealthy individual who had made him a present of it, bought it again and sent it back to him. The good bishop sold it a second time, and even a third time, and at last said to his generous benefactor who al-

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ways had it brought back to him: "We shall see which of us will tire first." It would be very desirable that those who live in ease and comfort should know this fact. It might be that the secret disquietude of St. John the Almoner would excite some in their minds, and induce them to be, on their side, generous and charitable to those who are in need. And yourselves, dear children, when you want anything, bear it patiently, thinking that there are so many others who are still worse off than you are.—REYRE, *Anecdotes Chretiennes*, 45.

221. *The Strada Pia, or Street of Charity, in Bologna.*—If any of you should ever travel in Italy, my young friends, and that you should pass through Bologna, ask to be shown the street which has borne for many ages the name of *Strada Pia*, that is to say, Pious Street, the Street of Charity. That name recalls one of the most astounding prodigies of the love of one's neighbor. About six hundred years ago there lived in that neighborhood a rich and noble lady, mother of an only son who was the delight of her heart. Whilst the child was playing about the steps of the door, a stranger passing by began to make game of him without any apparent reason. The boy answered this singular personage by a few hasty words. Enraged at this, the stranger drew his sword and pierced his weak and powerless adversary through and through. Scarcely was the murder perpetrated, when the wretch, seized with fear and terror, escaped though the first door he met, still brandishing in his

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hand the bloody sword. He ascended the staircase, and begged the mistress of the house to hide him somewhere, earnestly entreating her not to discover the place of his retreat. She granted his request and concealed him in a remote corner of her house, notwithstanding the horror with which he inspired her. Some minutes after, the officers of justice arrived in pursuit of the murderer. The lady, who wished to observe faithfully the promise she had given, not to betray the criminal, contented herself with saying: "You are at liberty to search for yourselves." Having searched the house without finding the object of their pursuit, they were about to retire, when one of them said: "How! madam, you look quite unconcerned! Know you not that he whom we seek has killed a child in the street, and that that child is your only son? Ha! here they come with his dead body!" "God of heaven!" cried the unfortunate woman, who could not believe her eyes. Pale as death, and saying not a word more, she withdrew to her chamber, and there remained for several hours, during which time she was assailed by a thousand conflicting thoughts, that filled her soul with the most cruel anxiety. The night being come, she went to the place where she had concealed the murderer of her son, and brought him food and drink. When she thought that the hour of danger was past, she gave him a purse of gold, and said to him: "Unhappy man, the child you killed was my son! Nevertheless, fear nothing, I will not harm you. God

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has given me strength to forgive you. Escape now, for I cannot answer for your safety in this house." Would it not be impossible, my dear children, to carry the love of our neighbor farther than this?—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 31.

222. *St. Francis de Sales' Enemy.*—Nothing should extinguish charity in our hearts. Our Lord forgave his executioners, we, too, should, therefore, forgive our enemies. St. Francis de Sales, that angel of charity and meekness, one day met an advocate, who, without any known reason, had sworn implacable hatred to him, and never failed, meet him where he would, to assail him with taunts and imprecations. The holy bishop approached him kindly, took him by the hand and said with the most winning sweetness: "You are my enemy, I know; but be assured that were you even to tear out one of my eyes, I would not cease to look kindly on you with the other." How strange it is, my young friends, that such meekness and generosity as this made no impression on that hardened heart; he continued to hate the Saint, and even fired a pistol at him; though the shot took no effect on him, it did on the priest who accompanied him. Cast into prison for this crime, the advocate was soon condemned to death, when he found in the Bishop of Geneva, whom he had so grievously persecuted, his most zealous defender. St. Francis de Sales even obtained his pardon from the King, and went himself to his prison with the written order for his release. Alas! dear children, see what

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hardness of heart can do; the wretch spat in his liberator's face, and rudely pushed him away. The holy bishop, terrified at the sight of such atrocious wickedness, addressed him in these words: "My dear brother, I have saved you from the hands of human justice, but, if you be not sincerely converted, you shall fall into the hands of God's justice, and then no one will be able to save you."—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 30.

223. *Bolder than a Fireman.*—There is nothing more affecting than the devotion of Mgr. d'Apchon, Archbishop of Auch, whose story has been so often published. In 1781, a fire having broken out in his archiepiscopal city, this venerable prelate hastened to the scene of the disaster, to encourage by his presence those who were endeavoring to extinguish the flames. Two children had been forgotten in a house that was all on fire, and their mother in the street without was wildly calling for some one to save them. The Archbishop then cried aloud that he would give three thousand francs to any one that should save the children. No one would venture, for it seemed as though the house were every moment about to fall. "Well!" said the prelate, "if no one else will try to save them, I will." So saying, he took off his cloak, darted on a ladder and ascended to the first story, where he began courageously to search for the children. In a short time, he was seen in the midst of a dense black smoke, holding in his arms the two poor little infants. With difficulty he descended the

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ladder, and scarcely had he reached the bottom, and placed the children in the arms of their mother, when the walls fell in with a tremendous crash. Every one clapped their hands in admiration, but what was still more affecting to behold, the venerable Archbishop, taking from his purse the three thousand francs he had offered as a reward, gave it to the woman whose children he had saved. There is Christian charity, my young friends, it is at once gracious and ingenious.—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 370.

224.—*The Gardener who Keeps a Pear for Thirst.*—People sometimes say, my dear children, when they would excuse themselves from giving alms, that one must keep a pear for thirst; they say wrong, as the following story proves: A gardener, who lived by the labor of his hands, was accustomed to give all his spare gains to the poor. He had already had this good habit a long time, when he began to be troubled with fears for the future. "What shall I do in my old age," said he to himself, "since, now that I am young, I save absolutely nothing?" These thoughts were ever in his mind, and at last he closed his heart entirely against the poor, and gave no more alms. He had soon reason to repent of this; one day, being at work, he cut his foot badly with his axe, and the wound was so long in healing that all the money he had saved with so much care was entirely spent; the foot could not even be cured, at all, and the doctor declared that nothing remained for him but to have it amputated. These words went to the heart of the

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unhappy gardener, and caused him some salutary reflections. "What good has my money done me?" said he to himself the night before the terrible operation; "where is it all now? Ah! Lord, forgive me my want of confidence; I now see my error, and will endeavor to correct it." He fell asleep towards morning, with this thought in his mind, and when the surgeon arrived he found the foot so much better that he could not restrain his surprise. The amputation was postponed. Only a few days passed when the gardener was almost completely cured. He resumed his work, and, faithful to his resolution, he managed to unite the economy that prudence requires with the charity of a good Christian.—SCHMID et BAUER, *Catechisme Historique*.

225. *Jews Lodged in a Priest's House.*—We should love our neighbor as ourselves, and our neighbor means all men, without distinction, even strangers, and those who have not the happiness of being in the true religion. I have read that, not far from Verdun, in France, a priest who inhabited a somewhat lonely spot, chanced on one occasion to meet a family of Jews journeying along. The family consisted of the husband, the wife, and two children. They were half dead with cold, and had no means of warming themselves. Immediately, and without any hesitation, this worthy clergyman took them to his house, gave them something to eat, and had a good fire made up to comfort them. Meanwhile, the wife fell ill, and these poor people were forced to give up the idea of

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continuing their journey. The good priest kept them in his house for three weeks, doing everything that he possibly could to make them comfortable. At their departure he gave them some money to pay their expenses on the way. This poor family, on reaching Metz, where they intended to take up their abode, lost no time in telling the Jews of that city how kindly and generously they had been treated by a priest in the neighborhood of Verdun. It was then resolved amongst them that as long as the good man lived, they would supply him, gratis, with coffee and sugar for his household. Moreover, they sent him a gold watch, whereon was inscribed the touching story we have just related. Imagine the good priest's surprise when he saw all this; he would have refused, but the grateful Jews insisted, and he was obliged to accept all.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 53.

226. *The Notes of a Rare Creditor.*—Amongst all the traits of charity which have come to my knowledge, there are few more interesting than the following, which was much talked of some years since: In a time of great distress, a wealthy proprietor in one of the Swiss Cantons invited all those who were indebted to him to go to his house. He took care to select for the meeting a day only a few days previous to that on which the rents all came due, and he pretended that he had some important business to transact with the tenants. The latter, who were nearly all farmers or laborers, arrived in great anxiety, expecting to hear from their landlord that they must be

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sure to have their money all ready for the day it fell due. The landlord received them all with a cheerful, smiling aspect, and contrived to make the conversation turn on the badness of the times; he testified much compassion for his poor tenants, and exhorted them to be of good heart, but never said a word of his own affairs. He merely told them that after dinner they would attend to business. The table was spread with abundance of everything, and the host himself presided with cordial hospitality. The guests appeared nowise deficient on the score of appetite, but it was remarked that they eat and drank very fast. The host was sorry to see it; he would rather have kept them longer in suspense, in order to make their joy the greater. Unable, however, to bear longer the cruel anxiety he saw painted on every face, he went out, and soon returned with a handful of papers. "I see plainly, my good friends," said he, "that you can neither eat nor drink, for fear of what I have to tell you about your rent. I am going to give each of you a note in which you will see my intentions; eat and drink now, for Providence will take care of the future." The tenants hastened to open the notes, and saw with astonishment that each had in his hand a discharge in full for his year's rent. At the sight, joy takes possession of their souls, they rise suddenly and gather round their benefactor loading him with blessings. Then they sit down again at table, eat with a right good will, and drink to the health of their generous landlord. The latter after-

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wards confessed that he had more joy in seeing these good people so happy, than if they had all paid the full amount of what they owed him.—Hoel, *Explic. du Cat. de Rodez*, IV., 51.

227. *Over a Workingman's Grave.*—It is sometimes in the humblest classes of society that we find the most delicate sentiments of charity and generosity. The Paris papers gave an account some years ago of a touching scene that took place on the 19th of November, 1849, in the Cemetery of Belleville. A cooper, named Perrot, was being interred when a workingman who had attended the funeral advances to the edge of the grave, and with tears and sobs thus speaks: "My friends, the worthy man whom you have just covered up never spoke to any one, during his life, of a good action he once did. Well! I am going to tell you all about it. Poor Perrot who now rests in this grave was, as you know, a hard-working man, living by his day's work, like all the rest of us. One evening, going home from his work, he met a friend who was going with a heavy heart the same way. Perrot accosts him, inquires into the cause of his trouble, and learns from him that next day his furniture is to be sold at auction, for the payment of a debt which he cannot meet. 'Come home with me,' said Perrot, 'I have got four hundred francs by me waiting for use, and it can't be put to a better one than paying your debt. Take it, and make no one the wiser, not even your wife or children.' The friend accepted the offer, and was so happy as to be

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able to pay back the loan, little by little. As for Perrot, he never spoke of it to any one. I am the friend for whom Perrot did that, and I tell it now over his half-closed grave, hoping that you'll all tell the story wherever you go, so that justice may be done to poor Perrot's memory." I need not tell you, my young friends, the impression which this recital made on all who heard it. Will not you, also, try to leave such secrets as that to be told of you?—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, 395.

228. *A Servant's 100 Francs.*—Charity is fine in any one, dear children, but it would seem to be still more so when it shines in one who would himself need the assistance of others. Abbe Mullois relates that, in the beginning of the winter of 1855, a young man presents himself at the house of the pastor of Valence, in the Department of Drome, France, and offers him a sum of money for the poor. He was a simple servant, humbly clad, and looking as though he worked hard for his living. "Good day, reverend father! here is a little alms I have brought you for the poor of the parish; it is only a hundred francs, for I am not rich, but, no matter, it will serve to buy bread for some of your poor." "What, friend! a hundred francs, did you say? and you would give all that to the poor? Now, you being only a servant, and not rich, how would it be if you were to fall sick?" Oh! but you see, reverend father, I want for nothing; I have my board and lodging besides my wages. As to my clothes, they cost me little, for

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my master is very kind, and often gives me some of his. Then, once in a while, I get a little money from people coming to the house; so, you see, I get along very well." "But would not your parents require some of that money?" "No; although they are not rich, still they make out to live, whilst there are crowds of poor creatures famishing with cold and hunger; that money will relieve some of them." "Still, my friend, I cannot accept your 100 francs, but I'll tell you what we will do; I will make two halves of it, you shall keep one, and I will take the other for the poor. And if ever you want anything, be sure you come to me." Thereupon, the good priest gave him 50 francs, and the poor young man goes off quite dejected. Some weeks after, he sent 25 francs more, and I am sure that before the winter was over he had distributed the remaining 25. Is it not a fine thing, children, to have such a generous heart for those who suffer?—Mullois, *Mois de Marie de tout le monde*, 90.

V.—WORSHIP DUE TO GOD.

229. *A Sacrilegious Altar Split in Two.*—You doubtless remember having read in your Sacred History, my little friends, that after the death of Solomon, his states were divided into two kingdoms, that of Juda and that of Israel. Jeroboam, who was at the head of that of Israel, had the sacrilegious intention of changing the religion of his subjects and

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forcing them to worship two golden calves, which he had placed, one at Bethel and the other at Dan, at the two extremities of his kingdom. Whilst he was engaged in this unhappy enterprise, God sent his prophet Ado to rebuke him for his impiety. This wretched prince, not content with all the evil he had done, carried his audacity so far as to offer incense himself on an altar he had caused to be erected. Ado presented himself before him and pronounced this terrible decree: "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord: Behold, a child shall be born to the house of David, Josias by name: and he shall immolate upon thee the priests of the high places, who now burn incense upon thee: and he shall burn men's bones upon thee. And to show that I speak the word of God, Behold the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out." He had scarcely finished these words when Jeroboam, stretching out his hand, cried "*Lay hold on him!*" But observe, dear friends, how the good God takes care of His servants and punishes the profane and impious—the arm which Jeroboam had extended to point out the holy prophet Ado, immediately withered, so that he could not draw it back again to him. At the same time the altar split in two, as the Lord had caused it to be foretold. Every one was seized with horror, but especially the king, who repented of his sacrilege, and asked pardon of the man of God. Ado prayed for him, and his arm was miraculously cured.—*III. Kings*, XII.

230. *Heliodorus Beaten with Rods.*—The worship

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which we owe to God, my young friends, must extend to all that is consecrated to Him. Hence we must be penetrated with a profound respect in churches. Let me tell you, on this head, the tragical story of the impious Heliodorus: He had been sent to Jerusalem by Seleucus, King of Syria, to seize the treasures deposited in the Temple. In vain did the high-priest Onias represent to him that he could not give them up, because the money was a sacred deposit, which had only been given him in trust for the support of widows and orphans; Heliodorus persisted none the less in his design, alleging the king's orders. The whole city was in a state of consternation, seeing the sacrilege that was about to be perpetrated. The priests, clothed in their sacerdotal robes, prostrated themselves before the altar, beseeching the Lord that He would not permit His sanctuary to be violated. Women, covered with sackcloth, filled the streets, praying with arms raised to heaven. The suspense of this confused multitude and the anguish of the high-priest were a sight at once touching and deplorable. But God soon made Heliodorus feel how foolish it is to brave His power, even in the holy place. He was already at the door of the treasure-chamber with his guards, when he was stopped by a young man in shining armor, who suddenly appeared mounted on a horse. Heliodorus was trampled under the feet of this furious animal, whilst two angels scourged him with rods. He was carried from the Temple fainting and half dead. But the high-priest

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obtained from God his cure, and the two angels who had so cruelly beaten him appeared to him once more, and said: "Return thanks to the high-priest Onias, on whose account God has spared your life; and knowing what things the Lord has done to you, you shall publish everywhere His greatness and His power." Heliodorus, having escaped this danger, went to inform the king of all that had happened to him; and as that prince, still desirous of having the money, sought whom he could send again to Jerusalem, Heliodorus said to him: "Prince, if you have any enemy, you will do well to send him thither, for even if he escapes death, you may be sure he will be so severely handled that he will have no wish to go back again; there is, indeed, a divine virtue hidden in that place. He who dwells in heaven is Himself present there, He is its protector, and He strikes all those who go to harm it." Observe well these last words, my dear children, they merit all your attention.—*II. Maccabees*, Chapter II.

231. *The Holy Water and the Grasshoppers.*—It would take an entire volume, my dear children, to recount all the miracles which have been wrought by means of holy water. I will now note but one; it is related by the blessed Theodoret, bishop of Cyr, in Syria, a doctor of the Church, and one of the most remarkable writers of the fifth century. He relates, then, that St. Aphraates having left Persia, his own country, became a solitary in the neighborhood of Edessa, then at Antioch, one of the greatest cities in

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the world and the capital of Syria. That country is sometimes ravaged in a singular manner by clouds of grasshoppers, who settle down on the fields, devouring everything green that they can find, and, to crown the misfortune, sometimes cause a plague by the multitudes of them that die and corrupt on the ground. In a certain year, when this pestilence appeared in all its horrors in the vicinity of Antioch, a poor man went to St. Aphraates, beseeching him to come to his assistance. "Father," said he, "we are lost. Here are the grasshoppers coming; they will eat up my field of wheat, and it is all I have to feed my wife and children, and pay the Emperor's taxes. I beseech you, man of God, have pity on me!" "But, my good man, I can do nothing of myself; it is only God who can work a miracle in your behalf. Nevertheless, if you have confidence, bring me a pitcher of water." The poor laborer went out, and quickly returned with the water; St. Aphraates dipped his hand in it, said a prayer over it, and having blessed it, gave it to the man, telling him to take the pitcher, and sprinkle a little of the holy water it contained all around his field. He did so exactly, and the power of the miraculous water was speedily manifested. The grasshoppers arrived, and in a moment darkened the air and covered the country to a great distance; but not a single one crossed the limits of our good laborer's field; such of them as went in that direction were thrown back as if by an invisible agency. The crop on that field was most abundant, convincing

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every one of the sanctity of Aphraates and the virtue of holy water.—D. GENEVAUX, *Histoires Choisies*. 257.

232. *The Prayer of Turenne's Soldiers.*—I once heard a gentleman who, doubtless, thought himself a great personage, saying: "Oh! religion is only good for children, and for ignorant country people." My young friends, that was not the opinion of the learned and the great—Turenne, for example, who was one of the most illustrious generals that France could ever boast. He always knew how, even amid the gravest and most important obligations, to find time and means to discharge his religious duties. He was seen, more than once, some hours before giving battle, in those moments of trouble and anxiety when the mind, agitated by a thousand tumultuous thoughts, seems as though it were carried entirely beyond itself, he was seen, I say, imploring, by prayer, the aid and protection of the God of Armies. He quietly retired to a wood, behind a bush or a wall, and there all alone, sometimes in the rain, and kneeling on the damp ground, he adored Him who is the Master of life and death, addressing to Him fervent prayers for victory. When he was on the point of attacking the lines of Arras, in 1654, he caused public prayers to be recited at the head of each battalion and of each squadron, and that for several days, in order to obtain the success of his undertaking. Following his example, almost every one confessed and received Holy Communion, and, according to the testimony of King James the Second, of England, an eye-witness, never

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was an army seen so full of faith and piety. You see by that, my dear children, that devotion is suitable for every one.—FILASSIER, *Dic. d'Education*, I., 17.

233. *A Church Built by a Poor Man.*—When we love God well, my young friends, we prove it by the zeal we have for His worship. I have read a very interesting story on this subject, concerning a poor old Chinese man. One day he came to the missionary who was in his village, to represent to him the extreme desire he had that a church might be built there. "Your zeal is commendable," said the Father, "but I have not the means at present of defraying the expense." "Oh! I will undertake to raise the money myself," rejoined the villager. The missionary, knowing him for several years, and seeing him living in great poverty, thought there was little chance of his doing what he said, nevertheless, he once more praised his good intention, representing to him that his village being considerable, it would require a church as large as that in the neighboring town; that, in the course of time, he might contribute to its erection, according to his ability, but that he could never, by any effort of his own, defray all the expense. "Excuse me, Father," said the old man, "but I think I shall be able to do what I propose." "But, do you know that it would take at least six thousand francs?" "I have them all ready, and if I had not, I would not come to trouble you with such a request." The Father was delighted to learn that this worthy man, whom he had believed very poor, was really in pos-

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session of so much ready money, and wished to employ it so usefully; but he was still more surprised when, having had the curiosity to ask him how he came to have such a sum, the good old man replied simply: "Father, it is now forty years since I got this notion in my head, and ever since I have deprived myself of a portion of my food, and done with as little clothing as I possibly could, so as to have the consolation, before I died, of seeing a church raised to the true God in my village." Is not this admirable, my dear children? See what one man can do, even if he be not rich, if he only loves the true God with all his heart, and is full of zeal for His worship.—REYRE, *Anecdotes Chretiennes*, 234.

234. *The Pilgrimage of Two Famous Philosophers.*—There is nothing so beautiful, nothing so affecting, my dear friends, as the ceremonies of religion. The celebrated Bernardine de St. Pierre and Jean Jacques Rousseau have themselves spoken of them with enthusiasm. "One day," says St. Bernardine de St. Pierre, "having gone to walk with Jean Jacques on Mount Valerian, at a short distance from Paris, when we arrived at the summit of the mountain, we took it in our heads to ask a dinner from the hermits who live there. We soon reached their dwelling; it was not yet their dinner-hour, and they were still at church. Jean Jacques proposed that we should go in and say our prayers. The hermits were reciting the Litany of Providence, which is very fine. After we had prayed a while in

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the little chapel, and the hermits were gone to their refectory, Jean Jacques said to me with much feeling: 'Now I realize what is said in the Gospel: *Where two or three are assembled together in My name, behold! I am in the midst of them.* Here there is indeed a feeling of peace and happiness which penetrate the soul.' I answered him—'If Fenelon lived, you would be a Catholic.' 'Certainly,' he replied, with tears in his eyes, 'if Fenelon lived, I would be his lackey, hoping one day to become his *valet de chambre*, that I might speak to him freely.'" Such were the sentiments and the admissions drawn from these infidel philosophers by the beauty of our worship and of our religion. Let us take delight, then, my dear young friends, in practising its duties all our lives.—DELACROIX, *Histoire du Mont-Valerien*, 43.

235. *A Soldier Profaning the Sacred Vessels.*—Let us beware, children, of ever forgetting the respect which is due to the house of God; evil would be sure to follow. Listen, now, to what I am going to tell you. In the time of the first French Republic, several regiments of soldiers who were in Italy were passing through a village, when a violent storm suddenly arose, followed by a heavy fall of rain. Some of the soldiers, finding the church open, went in for shelter. It was one of those unhappy years when every effort was being made to destroy religion, and when all those whose faith and piety were not deeply rooted, made a boast of impiety and irreligion. Many of these unhappy soldiers behaved in the Lord's

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temple as though it were a profane place. Some proposed to have wine brought thither. It was brought in large jars. But, as there were not enough of goblets or cups to drink from, there was one of the soldiers impious enough to provide himself with a sacred ciborium, by a horrible sacrilege. He goes up to the altar, breaks in the door of the tabernacle, dares to take the consecrated vessel in his hand, throws on the ground the sacred Hosts it contained, and goes back to his comrades with his prize, as though he had done something great. But the moment of God's terrible vengeance had arrived. Just as the wretch dipped the holy ciborium in the jar of wine he fell down dead, and, lest any one should doubt that his death was the act of divine vengeance, the ciborium which he had profaned could not be taken from his hand by any one till the pastor of that afflicted parish was brought, and he removing it without any difficulty, replaced it in the tabernacle. Several inhabitants of the village, who were in the church, were witnesses of the sacrilege committed by the soldier and the terrible chastisement inflicted upon him. One of them, a bad Christian, was converted on the spot, and went to confession the same day. Several others, even amongst the soldiers, did all they could to repair the horrible scandal given on that sad occasion. I have this fact from a French priest who was then in the country, and who related all the circumstances just as I have now.—Lassausse, *Explic. du Cat. de l'Empire*, 540.

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VI.—HOMAGE DUE TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

236. *Origin of the "Regina Cœli."*—Devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, my dear friends, has always been rewarded by miracles of grace and virtue. At the time when St. Gregory the Great was Pope, that is to say, about the year 590, there came upon Rome such a fearful calamity as had never been seen before. Every day thousands of persons were seen to die almost instantaneously, so that at last the survivors were not sufficiently numerous to bury the dead. The holy pope ordered prayers, fasts, penances; but all appeared useless. He then resolved to invoke the Blessed Virgin. He ordered that the clergy and the people should go in procession to the Church of St. Mary Major, and bear thither a picture, representing the Mother of God, painted by St. Luke, according to a pious tradition. Wonderful to relate, this procession suspended the ravages of the plague; wherever it passed, no more new cases were seen, and the old were gradually cured. But what most astonished the assembled crowd, was to see in the air, above the pillar built by the Emperor Adrian, an Angel in human form, seeming to hold in his hand a bloody sword, which he was in the act of replacing in its sheath, as if to indicate that the divine justice was going to suspend its rigor. Other angels soon appeared with the first, and they were heard singing, in praise of the Most Holy Virgin, the well-known anthem: *Regina Cœli lætare, alleluia!* The

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holy pope, Gregory the Great, hearing it like all the rest, cried out with all possible fervor: *Ora pro nobis Deum! alleluia!* That, my dear friends, was the origin of the *Regina Cœli*, which we say through all the Paschal time, that is to say, from Holy Saturday till the eve of Trinity Sunday.—Noel, *Explic. du Cat. de Rodez*, I., 152.

237. *A Prayer Eaten by a Condemned Criminal.*—A criminal, sentenced to be broken on the wheel, would not hear of confession. Word was brought to Father Bernard, who ran immediately to the prison. He has himself conducted to the criminal's cell, salutes him, embraces him, exhorts him, suggests to him sentiments of confidence, and, finally, threatens him with the wrath of God. But nothing could move the unhappy man; he would not so much as raise his eyes, and appeared deaf to all that was said to him. The confessor begs him at least to recite with him a very short prayer to the Blessed Virgin, which he declared he had never said without obtaining what he asked for. "*Let me alone with your prayers; go away!*" Bernard recites the prayer himself, from beginning to end. But, seeing that the obdurate sinner had not as much as opened his lips, his charity takes fire, his zeal is animated to new fervor, and, putting to the hardened felon's mouth a copy of the prayer, which he always carried about him, he tries to force it in, crying—"*Since you will not say it, you shall eat it!*" The prisoner, encumbered with his chains, and unable to defend himself from this harm-

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less attack, promises then to say the prayer, in order to get rid of the good Father's importunities. Bernard kneels down with him, and begins the prayer again. O wonderful prodigy! the prisoner had scarcely uttered the first words when he felt himself entirely changed. A torrent of tears flowed from his eyes; he sighed and groaned as though his heart would break. Father Bernard, overwhelmed with joy, embraces him, crying—"It is to the Blessed Virgin, my brother, that you owe your salvation." "Ah! I see it all now, Father," replied the prisoner, "would to God that those words had made more impression on me when you first spoke them." "Is it possible, brother, that I have seen you before now?" "Alas, yes, Father, I still wore a religious habit when you met me one day, and running up to me without knowing me, seized suddenly with a transport which you have doubtless forgotten, you said, embracing me: 'Brother, rejoice, you shall obtain your salvation through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin.' My apostacy and the numberless crimes to which it led, may show you how I then despised your prediction; but the sentiments of regret and compunction which I now feel, make me hope that it shall be accomplished." After saying these words, the poor criminal begged Father Bernard to give him some time to prepare for confession; but, as he recalled, in the bitterness of his heart, the transgressions of his life, he was so touched by the sight of his crimes and the greatness of the divine mercy, that he expired of grief the

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same hour. Would you wish to know what famous prayer it was that Father Bernard would have made the prisoner eat? Well, my friends, you all know it; it is the *Memorare*; or, "Remember, most pious and tender Virgin!" Say it every day, and it will bring you happiness.—LEMPERIERE, *Life of Father Bernard*, 86.

228. *I was Born a Jew, and I will Die a Jew.*—Thousands of volumes have been written on the miracles wrought by the intermediation of the Blessed Virgin. Here is one that made a great noise some years since; I have myself seen the person to whom it occurred. It was, in Rome, in the end of Autumn of 1841. A Jew of Strasburg, named Alphonse Ratisbon, very rich and very learned, was travelling for his health and also for pleasure. One of his earliest friends was a young Protestant named Gustave de Bussiere. It sometimes happened that they discussed the question of religion, but their conversations always ended with—"Bigotted Protestant!" from the one, "Obstinate Jew!" from the other. The Baron de Bussiere, Gustave's father and an excellent Catholic, undertook, in his turn, the conversion of M. Ratisbon, but all he could get him to say was—"My lord baron, I was born a Jew, and I'll die a Jew."—"Since that is the case, Sir, will you, at least, do me the favor of wearing this medal on your neck?"—"How! my lord! do you mean to mock me that you propose such a thing?"—"Not at all, Sir, I am very far from being in jest, and when you are so sure of

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yourself, as you say you are, I do not see what you have to fear from hanging this medal around your neck."—"Oh! of course, I have nothing to fear, and I will take your lordship's medal were it only to let you see that we Jews are not so obdurate as people say." For some time nothing more was said, and the whole thing seemed to have been forgotten. One day, our travellers having entered a church in Rome, dedicated to St. Andrew, M. Ratisbon examined it carelessly, seeking only curiosities and works of art, but M. de Bussiere had gone aside a little, and left him alone for some moments. What was his surprise, on rejoining him, to find him prostrate before the altar of St. Michael! He calls him, no answer; he shakes him by the shoulder, but Alphonse appears to take no notice of anything. "Ah! how happy I am," he cries at length with sighs and sobs; "how good is God! what happiness! how unhappy they are who do not believe!" At the same time he drew his medal from his bosom and covered it with tears and kisses. He desired to go immediately to a priest and be baptized. The Baron, much rejoiced, conducted him to Father de Villefort, to whom M. Ratisbon related the marvellous change which had been wrought within him. He was baptized some days after, and the *obstinate Jew* subsequently became a priest full of zeal and ardor for the worship of God and the devotion to the Most Holy Virgin. It was the miraculous medal that had converted him.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, I., 232.

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239. *The Lamp Miraculously Lit.*—It is not only in France, dear children, that the Blessed Virgin has been pleased to reward the faith of her servants by miracles. Here is a very curious fact, attested by the Deacon Peter, a religious of the celebrated abbey of Monte Cassino, in the kingdom of Naples. In 1114, some of his brethren were sailing on the Mediterranean, returning from Sardinia, when they were carried off by Mahometan pirates, and conveyed to a little town which is believed to have been the present Guelma. There was there a small congregation of Christians, formed in a suburb and governed by a priest or a bishop. Thanks to the intervention of Roger, the powerful Count of Sicily, the poor slaves were not long without being liberated. Their dean, Azon, having died during his captivity, his monks had buried him before the altar, in a church which bore the name of St. Mary. A lamp was placed to burn perpetually on his tomb; but the Arab chief would not allow it to remain lit, and had it extinguished every evening. Wonderful to relate, the lamp lit of itself every night, without any one being able to account for how it was done. The Arab chief, supposing it to be a stratagem of the Christians, caused the oil to be stealthily taken from the lamp and replaced by water. But what was his surprise on seeing that the lamp was burning in the morning as brightly as ever, and that the water burned as well as the best oil. By his orders the lamp is again extinguished, and the Christians are strictly forbidden to enter the

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church, which is even surrounded by soldiers. Nothing happened till midnight; but at that moment a star was seen by the guard coming down from the heavens, and resting directly over the tomb of the venerable Azon; they quickly opened the door, and found the lamp again lit. Their chief refused at first to believe this prodigy; the following night he repaired to the house of the Catholic priest and watched there till midnight. He, too, had the advantage of seeing the star descend and light with its rays the funereal lamp. This incontestible miracle removed his suspicions with regard to the Christians, whom he thenceforward permitted to enter the church when they pleased, and to keep lit night and day the miraculous lamp that burned before Mary's altar, symbolical of the sentiments with which our hearts should ever be animated towards her.—MGR. PAVY, *History of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin in Africa*, 51.

240. *A Woman Cured by the Archconfraternity.*—You have all heard, my dear children, of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Victory, the church belonging to which, in Paris, I have many times had the honor of visiting. Incredible prodigies are wrought there every day. Here is one, related by the pastor himself who founded this holy association. "One Sunday morning, in the month of October, a gentleman who appeared to me very anxious and much distressed, accosts me in the sacristy some moments before Grand Mass, and says to me: 'I wish to speak with the pastor.'—'I am he, sir.'—'Oh, indeed?

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Well, sir, I have a wife whom I love; she is the mother of three little children. She is very ill, I believe at the last extremity; the doctors told me last night that they could do no more for her. My poor wife is dying. Oh! but it is hard to be separated from one we love so well!' The worthy man could say no more; the tears were in his eyes, and I saw by the working of his features that he was trying hard to restrain his emotion. I spoke to him of his wife, hoping to soothe his mind. He shed some tears, then added: 'I was told that people came to you when there was sickness in their families, that you had prayers said by an Archconfraternity, and the sick were cured. I do not understand all that, but if you can do anything, I beseech you, cure my wife.'—'It is not we that will cure her, but we shall beg of God to do it, and this evening we shall pray for her.'—'And my poor wife shall be cured?'—'I do not know, but I hope so.' Two weeks after, and again on Sunday morning, the same person came to me. This time, his face was radiant. 'Sir,' said he, 'I come to discharge a debt of gratitude, and to thank you in the name of my wife and for my little children. My wife is quite recovered, and what is very extraordinary is, that the Sunday I came to see you, just two weeks ago, the physicians would order nothing for her; she could take nothing all day, and towards evening she became quite insensible. We expected only her death, when, at nine o'clock at night, she fell into a peaceful slumber, which lasted for several

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hours, and she awoke free from pain, complaining only of weakness. She eat with a good appetite, recovered her strength, sat up at the end of eight days, and is now perfectly recovered.'—'Well, my dear sir, it was just at nine o'clock that we recommended her to the prayers of the Archconfraternity, two weeks ago.'—'Oh! now I believe that there is a Supreme Being?'—'How! did you not believe before now that there is a God?'—'Excuse me—if—but I confess I did not trouble myself much about Him.—'But, my dear friend, it was He who gave you life, and preserves it to you; it is from Him you have your strength, and the means of earning your own livelihood, and that of your children. If He abandoned you a moment what would become of you? And it is He who has restored your wife to life and health; it is He whom you ought to thank for that favor. How will you do that, if you do not think of Him?'—'That is all very true, sir, but how can one do it? Engaged in business from morning till night, I have no time to think of anything else. But, pray tell me, how you managed to cure my wife so quickly; you say it was at nine o'clock that you recommended her to the Archconfraternity, and it was just at nine o'clock that she got the favorable turn. . . . . What, then, is this Archconfraternity? they are, doubtless, priests?'—'I tell you it was not we that cured your wife, but the goodness of God who granted that favor to the prayers of the Archconfraternity; and the Archconfraternity is a

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society of good Christians, who unite to ask of God, by their prayers and good works, the conversion of sinners, the cure of the sick, the relief of all the miseries which afflict their fellow-creatures. There are many priests in the society, but there are many more of the laity, yes, millions.'—'But, sir, they prayed for my wife, without knowing anything of her; I did not even tell you my name.'—'That is not necessary; Christians know that all men are children of God, consequently, their brethren, and that God commands them to love them as they love themselves. In order to please God, they render to their neighbor all the services they can, and they beg of the Holy Virgin to obtain from God the graces and helps which they cannot themselves procure for them. That is what the Archconfraternity did for your wife.'—'How beautiful! ah, sir, I will tell my wife all about it. But these good works you speak of, where are they done?'—'Here in the church, every Sunday evening, at seven o'clock.'—'Ah! sir, I knew nothing of all this, nor my wife neither, but I am going to tell her; she may not be able to leave the children at that hour, but I will be sure to come myself. Oh, sir, will you thank those good Christians for me? they have made me doubly happy.'"—ABBÉ MULLOIS, *Mois de Marie de tout le monde*, 73.

241. *A Conquest of the Archconfraternity*—Another very interesting story of devotion to the Blessed Virgin. This, too, is connected with Our Lady of Victory. It is a worthy tradesman who speaks: "I

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am the father of a family, and nearly sixty years of age, residing some hundreds of miles south from the capital. Being unhappily given up entirely to business, I had totally neglected my religious duties for years long. During all this time I never once thought of the sad state in which I was living. Business called me to Paris, where I spent some months from time to time I met some pious persons who took much interest in me. Every time I saw them they spoke to me of being converted, encouraging me with the assurance that in practising religion I should have every sort of consolation; I listened, however, with the greatest indifference, and sometimes even ridiculed what I heard. So things went on for three months. The persons of whom I have spoken thought they would have recourse to the prayers which the Association is accustomed to say for poor sinners. I was recommended to them in a very particular manner, by my kind friends, and my name, at the same time, inscribed as a member of the Archconfraternity; it was on the 25th of October. Next day one of my friends told me of what had been done. I regarded it all as a jest; however some three or four days after my enrolment, that is to say, on the following Saturday, this person asked me to go and see the chapel. Having some business to transact in the neighborhood, I went in in passing, and still very carelessly. I was struck by the collected and respectful demeanor of the people who were in the church, and I could not help imitating them. Never-

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theless I went away without making any other reflections. Next day, Sunday, I went again to the ceremony, at seven o'clock in the evening; I waited for all the prayers and instructions. I confess I was a little more attentive than the first time; I said a few prayers, and then retired to my lodgings. I lay down, but I could not sleep. Do as I would, I could not help thinking of what I had seen and heard. I was really vexed to find that the more I tried to banish these thoughts and compose myself to sleep the more importunate they became. In short, I scarcely slept a wink the whole night. I spent four days and four nights in the same restless state. On Thursday morning I determined to go to Our Lady of Victory, with the intention of approaching the tribunal of penance, if I met a priest. I found none then, but on Sunday I was taken to a worthy priest who received me with inexpressible kindness and took me to his own apartment. I already experienced an emotion that was by no means natural to me; after I had spent two or three minutes kneeling before a crucifix and an image of the Blessed Virgin, I was entirely overcome. The graces wherewith the divine goodness had loaded me caused me to shed a torrent of tears, and, consequently, to postpone my confession; twice I was obliged to interrupt myself. Even when my confession was ended, I still felt the same sentiments, the same emotion. My charitable director had the goodness to conduct me to the church, where I made my thanksgiving. It was there that my heart expe-

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rienced the most inexpressible emotion: the Immaculate Heart of Mary had effected a marvellous change in me. And how could I fail to hope for pardon from her Divine Son Jesus, when I was so happy as to have for my protectress that charitable Mother? Yes, I received the signal favor of being reconciled with her Adorable Son, who received me as another prodigal, and admitted me to His holy Table." That is an interesting story, my dear children, but I might tell you thousands of the same kind, did time permit.—MULLOIS, *Mois de Marie de tout le monde*, 27.

242. *A Little Taper to Mary.*—A very touching fact took place in Belgium during the month of May, 1853. I hope, children, you will hear it with pleasure, and that it will incite you to celebrate more and more the beautiful month of Mary. Two old people lived with great difficulty in a miserable little garret, for which they paid twenty francs a year. They often went to bed supperless, and very often, too, their breakfast consisted of some hard crusts, soaked in water. They did not care to make their poverty known, for they had once been better off. One Saturday they found themselves without a *sou*, without bread, or food of any kind. The wife was utterly helpless, and the husband was sick that day and could not leave his bed. The day passed sadly enough, night came on and they had eaten nothing. All they could do was to weep and pray. All day on Sunday things grew worse and worse. It was now forty-eight hours since they had tasted food. The cold

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sweat poured down over their pale and ghastly faces. "We are going to die, my poor wife," said the old man, "God has abandoned us!" She made no answer. Some time after, however, she raises her head, and, as if struck by a sudden inspiration: "Husband," says she, "let us invoke the Blessed Virgin: she is the comfort of the afflicted, and the refuge of those who suffer. She will save us. Here, I have one little taper left, let us burn it before her image, she will come to our assistance." The poor old couple, animated with this last hope, made an effort to rise; it was in the middle of the night. They find the taper, light it, and place it before a statue of the Blessed Virgin which had found no purchasers, because it had no material value. They knelt down, and, leaning one on the other, besought the assistance of Her who is never invoked in vain. They wept bitterly. A neighbor woman having occasion to rise in the night to give drink to her sick child, observed the light in the old people's room. "They must be sick," she said to herself, and, moved by a mysterious impulse, she takes her lanthorn and goes up to where they lived. She opens the door. What a pitiful sight was there! The two poor creatures, panting, and exhausted, could scarcely hold each other up, and were rather lying than kneeling before the image of the Redeemer's Blessed Mother! They acknowledged their utter destitution. The charitable neighbor hastens to bring them some nourishment, and the small quantity of provisions which she could spare. Next day

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she went to inform the pastor and the president of the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, who lost no time in bringing relief to the sufferers. To crown all, some days after, a small legacy came into their hands, and thus placed above the reach of want, they delight to tell over and over the truly miraculous assistance they received from the Blessed Virgin, in return for a little taper which they had burned in her honor. I hope, dear children, that during the fair month of Mary, you will present to that good Mother not only the flowers of your gardens, but those of your hearts, that is to say, good prayers, good actions, tender affections.—*Daily Rewards*, No. LVII., 8.

VII.—HOMAGE DUE TO THE SAINTS.

243. *Relics of St. Babylas.*—The very presence of the relics of a saint is enough, dear friends, to deprive the devil of all his power; hence it is that some are always placed under the altar stone where Mass is said. One day, the Emperor Julian the Apostate, who had embraced the worship of idols, offered sacrifice to Apollo, near the fountain of Castalia, in the Daphne suburb, at Antioch. Unable to obtain an answer to what he desired, he asked the priests what was the reason of this silence. The demons replied that it was occasioned by the proximity of the tomb of the martyr Babylas. That holy bishop of Antioch had died in 251. Gallus, the associate of Constantius in the empire, and the brother of Julian, had caused a church to be built near the Temple of Apollo, to

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purify the Daphne suburb from the superstitions and crimes of the pagans, and had translated thither the bodies of St. Babylas, and the martyrs, his companions. Then Julian sent for the Galileans, as he called the Christians, and ordered them to remove these relics. The Christians, having assembled in that place, carried off with great joy the coffin of those holy martyrs, chanting as they marched, in the very ears of Julian, that verse of the 96th Psalm, which they repeated by way of chorus: *Let them be all confounded that adore graven things, and that glory in their idols.* The relics had no sooner been transferred to the city of Antioch, than fire from heaven fell on the Temple of Apollo, the roof of which it burned, and reduced its very idol to ashes, by a visible punishment from the Lord. Here we see a temple built to the true God in the third century, in which to deposit the relics of saints; we also see the presence of those relics imposing silence on the demons. All that is an evident proof of the high antiquity of the veneration which the Church loves to render to the precious remains of saints and martyrs. —Sozomenes, *Eccles. Hist.*, Lib. V., Chap. 19.

244. *The Remains of a Robber.*—The Church is very prudent and very wise in her veneration of the relics of Saints; she never admits them without good proof. Thus there was near the monastery of Marmoutier, in the neighborhood of the city of Tours, a place consecrated by the erroneous opinion of the people to the memory of a supposed martyr. St. Martin, who never

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gave credence lightly to uncertain things, gave, in this matter, a proof of consummate prudence. He commenced by inquiring of the oldest of the clergy, as to the name of this pretended martyr and the time at which he suffered. As he could learn nothing certain, he abstained for some time from going to this holy place, fearing to do anything hurtful to religion, in the uncertainty in which he was placed, and in order not to authorize superstition by his example. At length, he went to the place, where the bishops his predecessors are believed to have erected an altar; he took with him some of his monks, knelt on the very tomb of the pretended martyr, and prayed that God would make known to him who it was that was buried there. Then he perceived, on his left, a hideous phantom, horrible to behold. He commanded him to tell his name and state. The spectre obeyed, told his name, confessed that he had been a robber, executed for his crimes, and that the people honored him by mistake. "I am condemned to hell," he added, "and I have nothing in common with the martyrs, who are in glory." All present heard the miraculous voice, but it was only St. Martin that saw the spectre. He published then what he had seen, and caused the altar which had been erected on the spot to be destroyed. Having done all that true Christian prudence and pastoral zeal suggested, he delivered his people from the superstition into which they had fallen through a mistake of other times.—SULPICIUS SEVERUS, *Life of St. Martin.*

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215. *A Pagan who Invokes the Saints.*—Strange to say, my young friends, it has sometimes happened that the Saints have heard the prayers even of pagans who confidently addressed them. I have read somewhere that Chosroes, a famous king of Persia, who flourished in the sixth century, experienced this himself. He was at war with one of his generals who had revolted against him. A little before the commencement of the battle, he learned that the celebrated martyr St. Sergius obtained from God whatever he asked. He conceived the happy idea of having recourse to him, and besought him to obtain the victory for him. He was heard, and his enemy was completely routed, although his forces far outnumbered those of Chosroes. The latter, full of gratitude to the holy martyr, gave to his church a gold cross enriched with precious stones. He, moreover, restored to that church another very valuable cross which his grandfather had unjustly taken from it. Finally, he added several privileges to those already enjoyed by the basilica of St. Sergius. All this, doubtless, proves his gratitude, but it also proves how great is the power of the Saints with God, and how certain it is that they will hear the prayers of those who confidently invoke their aid. If an idolatrous prince who invokes a Saint obtains what he asks for, how much more shall we, dear friends, who are Catholics and the brethren of the Saints, obtain what we ask through their intercession in faith and trust?—Schmid and Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, II., p. 92.

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246.—*The Emperor's Coin.*—When we honor the image of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, or any of the Saints, it is them we honor, and not the material, more or less rude, of which that image is made. This is admirably explained by St. Stephen, abbot of a monastery near Nicomedia, in Asia Minor. The Emperor Constantine Copronymus, who was of the sect of Iconoclasts, that is to say, image-breakers, would fain have gained him over to his party, hoping that his example might draw the laity after him. He had him brought, therefore, to Constantinople, and employed, in turn, threats, persuasions, and arguments to seduce him. But all was in vain. At length, losing patience, that impious prince had him brought before him for the last time and spoke to him angrily—"What impudence! what audacity! a wretched little monk dares to resist the Emperor!" The Saint did not allow himself to be intimidated by these taunts, and remained modestly silent. "Well! have you nothing to say, you stupid man? you do not deign to answer me!" "If you wish, sire, to put me to death, I am ready; but if you would graciously take my case into consideration, there is no necessity for being angry." "You treat us as heretics; have we, then, ever despised the doctrine of the Holy Fathers of the Church?" "Yes, Prince, you trample under foot the sacred images which they venerated; you have not been ashamed to say that a crucifix, or a statue of the Blessed Virgin are idols, like the images of Apollo or Diana." "But, blockhead, when we

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trample on an image of wood or stone, do we trample on Jesus Christ, or the Saints?" Instead of answering this impertinence, St. Stephen took a coin from his pocket and showed it to Constantine, asking him whose image was stamped upon it. "It is mine—the Emperor's." "Well," said the holy man, turning to the officers present, "and what would be done to him who should throw that coin on the ground, spit upon it, and trample it under foot?" "He would be put in prison, and punished severely." "Alas!" sighed St. Stephen, "people honor the image of an Emperor, and they would have me trample under foot the image of my God. Is this reasonable or just?" Constantine well understood the drift of this reasoning, but he was too much enraged and too obstinate in his power to be influenced by it. He caused the holy abbot to be beheaded.—REYRE, *Anec. Chret.*, 61.

247. *The Miracle of the Ardentes.*—What God sometimes refuses to the prayers of the faithful, He often grants to the prayers of the Saints and the mere presence of their relics. A cruel malady called the Plague of the Ardentes ravaged the capital of France in 1129, in the reign of Louis, surnamed the Fat. An inward fire consumed the intestines of the poor victims of this destructive malady; the art of the physicians was entirely at fault, and could do nothing to stop its ravages. Stephen, bishop of Paris, a prelate of eminent sanctity, ordered fasts and prayers throughout his whole diocese; but they appeared

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useless, and God was still, it would seem, inexorable. At last the pious prelate conceived the idea of having a solemn procession, in which the shrine of St. Genevieve was to be borne from her church to the cathedral. O prodigy! at the very moment when it crossed the threshold of its sanctuary, all the sick were restored to health, with the exception of three, who, perhaps, wanted faith, or that God in His merciful designs would sanctify them by a longer trial. Pope Innocent II. consecrated the memory of this event by a festival, which the church of Paris still celebrates every year, on the 26th of November, under the title of *Ste Genevieve des Ardents.—Life of St. Genevieve.*

248. *Little Xavier Restored to Life.*—We each have the happiness, my dear children, of bearing the name of one, and sometimes even of several saints. These are our patrons, that is to say, our protectors with God, and we should never forget to address them by that title. A pagan woman, of the kingdom of Tanjaour, in India, being converted with all her family, cherished ever after a special devotion to St. Francis Xavier. She had a child whom she tenderly loved; when he was baptized, she would have him called Xavier, hoping that the great Apostle of the Indies would save his life and preserve him in innocence. Some time after his baptism, this child, who was ten or twelve years old, was tending sheep with two other little boys of his own age. They were all three struck dead by lightning. Their mothers, hear-

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ing of the terrible accident, ran, of course, to take away their bodies. Two of them, who were idolators, seeing no remedy for their misfortune, had their children buried. But the Christian woman took the motionless and lifeless body of her little Xavier, and carried it to the church. There, addressing her holy patron—"Great Saint," said she, "are you not the protector of my family? Have I not told my relations a hundred times that I had nothing to fear after placing my confidence in you? Yet my son is no more. Shall there be no difference between those idolatrous mothers who know not the true God, and me who make profession of serving Him and of being particularly devoted to you? Comfort an afflicted mother; you have raised many from the dead, can you not also raise my son?" She was still speaking when some Christian women, who were present, thought they perceived a slight motion in little Xavier's body. In fact, two or three minutes after, he opened his eyes; his mother threw herself on him and embraced him with transport. He was full of life, and showed not even the slightest trace of the lightning that had struck him dead.—GUILLOIS, *Mois de Marie de tout le monde*, 173.

249. *Pilgrimage to St. Ann of Auray.*—Of all places of pilgrimage in Brittany, St. Ann of Auray is one of the most celebrated. People go there from far and near. On the festival of that holy mother of Mary, the concourse of strangers is immense; Mass can only be said, on that great solemnity, on a very high altar

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in the open air. That altar is reached by a double staircase, which the pilgrims so often ascend barefoot or on their knees, that their piety and devotion have already worn some of the steps; and yet this pilgrimage of St. Ann of Auray is only a couple of hundred years old, since it dates but from 1625. Its origin is thus accounted for: A good peasant in the neighborhood was driving his plough; on reaching a certain part of the field his oxen stopped; he tried all he could to make them go on, but all in vain. The next day, and the following days, the peasant returned to his field, but his oxen still refused to pass the spot where they stopped the day before. Amazed, and even frightened at what he could not by any means understand, he got a Mass said, and the following night, being unable to sleep, he walked out in the fields saying his beads with all the fervor of a true Breton. Suddenly he perceived a great light in the field he had been unable to plough. In the midst of a luminous aureola he distinguished a woman clothed in white, and pointing with her finger to a certain part of the field; it was the very spot where his oxen had stopped. Next day, the good peasant and his family dug down at the spot indicated, and found in the ground an image of the Blessed Virgin's mother. A small oratory was raised on the spot, but it soon became too small for the ardent piety of the pilgrims. The present church was then built. In former times, kings, princes, and other great persons enriched it with gifts and ornaments. In the nineteenth century

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Madame the Dauphiness and her illustrious sister went there to pray. A silver lamp was presented to that venerated shrine by the ill-fated Mary Caroline of Sicily, Duchess de Berry; it bears the date of her pilgrimage, 24th June, 1828. But pilgrims no less illustrious went within a few years to pray at St. Ann's of Auray; yes, my young friends, Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugenie piously knelt and heard Mass in that venerable sanctuary on the 15th of August, 1858.—(Guillois, *Nouvelle Explic. du Catechisme*, 174.—G. S. G.

250. *A Fine Picture of the Scourging at the Pillar.*—When we honor sacred images, it is not the stone, the canvas, or the wood that receives our homage, but the persons whom they represent. A Protestant, named Schubart, relates that entering one day the garden of a convent in Italy, he saw there a Franciscan monk kneeling before a magnificent picture of Our Lord, painted in fresco. It represented the Scourging in Pilate's Hall, and the blood actually seemed dropping from the sacred image. The monk arose, on seeing the stranger, but his face was still radiant with the ardor of his devotion. "You have a superb picture there," said the Protestant, addressing him. "The original is far superior," said the monk, smiling. "And why do you not rather address the original in your prayers, father?" This question gave the monk to understand that it was a Protestant who spoke, and he made him this reply: "You seem to be a Protestant, and not very favor-

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able to the veneration of sacred images; I must, therefore, call your attention to the fact that this picture only assists my imagination, so that I may the more easily represent to myself my Saviour's Passion. My mind does not fix itself on that Christ painted in colors on the wall, but to the real Christ who died for me. Can you pray without having some image before your mind, that is to say, without representing to yourself, at least in imagination, the object of your devotion? Is it not better that an artist, a master in the art of painting, should represent the saints to us, than leave it to our imagination?" This reasoning was so clear, so conclusive, that Schubart could only answer: "You say true, father, I never thought of it in that way." And he withdrew in some confusion at the thought of having been so far instructed by a poor monk, whom he probably little expected to find skilled in theology.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II. 129.

251. *The Cross and the Vendean Catholic.*—There happened, at the time of the Revolution, a heroic instance of respect for sacred images. A Vendean, named Ripoche, a soldier in the royal and Catholic army, having been taken prisoner by the Republicans, was taken to a cross and told: "You have been taken with arms in your hands, so your death warrant is signed. There is the cottage in which you were born, your father lives there still, and so may you, if you will only be obedient to what you are told." The Vendean looked at his humble home, and the tears

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came into his eyes. "What must I do in order to save my life?"—"Take this axe, and cut down that cross." Ripoche took the axe; his companions in misfortune, who had been captured with him, shuddering turned away: they thought the Vendean was going to abjure his God. Ripoche, brandishing the axe which had been placed in his hands, darted on the pedestal of the cross, and, raising his arm, he cried in a voice that might be heard all around: "Death to him who shall insult the Cross of Jesus Christ! I will defend it to my last breath!" Resting his back against the sacred image, he flourishes his axe; a divine ardor flashes from his eyes; a supernatural strength seems to animate him. He succeeds for some moments in beating back his sacrilegious assailants. Astounded by such heroic courage, they dare not advance. But soon, ashamed of being stopped by a single man, they break into a savage yell and rush on the valiant Christian. The number increases; he is surrounded from every side. . . . He still keeps hold of the cross; the monsters tear his arms from around it they throw him down on the pedestal, and pointing, their bayonets to his breast, they tell him: "Down with that superstitious emblem and your life shall be spared!"—"It is the sign of my redemption," cries the Vendean, "I will embrace it still!" and by a last effort, throwing his arms round the tree of salvation, he thus received his death at the hands of his impious adversaries. What faith! my dear friends, what courage! what intrepidity!—GUILLOIS, *Explic. du Cat.*, 127.

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252. *Voltaire's Brain.*—Heretics, and even at times some ignorant or ill-disposed Catholics, blame us, my young friends, for the respectful homage we pay to the images and relics of the Saints. They are wrong in doing so, for they pay quite as much honor themselves at times to objects which have belonged to what they call great men. You can have no idea of the number of locks of hair, sticks, shoes, snuff-boxes, and all such things that sell at a very high price, because they are said to have belonged to D'Alembert, Frederick the Great, Franklin, Napoleon, and a host of other celebrated persons of ancient or modern times. There was an account published some years ago in the Paris papers of a Mr. Verdier, the grand-nephew of a surgeon of the time of Louis XV., having written to the French Academy to offer, if desired, a portion of Voltaire's brain, which his grand-uncle had put aside and preserved in spirits of wine, when embalming the body of that famous philosopher, who was then more than eighty years old. This brain must have appeared to that gentleman a very precious relic, since he thought it worthy of being offered to the French Academy; but the members of that learned society were not quite of his opinion, for they answered Mr. Verdier that they could not accept the *relic*, as they had no *reliquaire* in which to place it. So you see, my dear children, how different is the fate that awaits, even in this life, the proud philosopher and the humble servant of God. A saint, unknown and despised, will be placed

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on altars and venerated throughout the whole earth, whilst the mere man of learning and of reputation will be forgotten after the lapse of some years.—C. S. G.

256. *The Little Idol Spared.*—One of the most celebrated martyrs of the Church is St. Sebastian. Even before he had confessed the faith in torments, he had made himself famous by the prodigies he wrought. The Governor of Rome, named Chromatius, who was afflicted with infirmities which the physicians could not cure, had the curiosity to see him, hoping that he would cure him. When St. Sebastian appeared before him, he failed not to speak to him of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to tell him that it was in His name and by His power he performed all the miracles of which he had heard. "Well!" said Chromatius to him, "let Jesus Christ cure me, and I promise Him that I will become a Christian." "That is not enough," replied St. Sebastian, "commence by breaking all your idols, and I promise you, you shall be cured." Chromatius promised him, and they parted. Some days after, more tortured than ever, the Governor sent again for the generous Sebastian, and began bitterly to reproach him: "How is this, thou wretched Christian? at thy word I break all my idols, and behold I suffer more than ever!" "Is it true, my lord, that you have broken all your idols? have you spared none?" "No, I broke them all, except one little golden statue, which I value very highly, because it has been a long time in our family." "Ah!

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my lord, I am no longer surprised that you have not been cured; were that idol dearer to you than all the world, you must destroy it, because you cannot, in conscience, prefer it to the God who has created you, who preserves you, and will one day judge you. Break it, and I tell you again, I will answer for your cure." Chromatius, persuaded, acquitted himself with a good grace, broke his golden statuette to pieces, and was perfectly cured.—LASSAUSSE, *Explic. du Cat. de l'Empire*, 571.

254. *The Horoscope of Two Children.*—The ancients imagined that the stars exercised particular influences on children who were born in such or such a conjuncture. This superstitious idea lasted for many ages, and even yet you may sometimes hear the phrase—*He is born under a lucky, or an unlucky star.* Nothing is more ridiculous than this notion, as St. Augustine himself took care to prove to us by a story of his own day. The circumstance occurred to one of his friends, named Firminius, who related it to him in these terms: "My father was so superstitious, that, some time before I came into the world, he consulted the stars in order to read my fortune. He had a friend who was no less addicted to astrology than himself; this friend likewise consulted the stars for one of his domestics, who was on the point of giving birth to a child. They agreed together that each should send a messenger to the other to apprise him of the day and hour on which the respective births should take place. By a singular chance, the mes-

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sengers set out at the same moment from the two houses, and met midway on the road, which proves that the two children were born exactly at the same time. Well! behold the folly of fortune-tellers: my father pretended to have read in the stars that I was to be a great genius, and all my life through a favorite of fortune. His friend, who had been observing the heavens at the same moment, and who, consequently, should have seen just what he did, assured him that he saw quite the contrary, an evident proof that there is nothing more ridiculous, more absurd, than observations of this kind."—D. GENEVAUX, *Histoires choisies*, p. 436.

255. *Friday.*—I am sure, my dear friends, you have often heard it said that Friday is an unlucky day, that nothing should ever be undertaken on that day, and so forth. This superstition is very common in Paris, which, nevertheless, pretends to be the first city in the world. Louis XIII., King of France, was not one of those who shared this silly belief. Having fallen dangerously ill in 1643, Extreme Unction was proposed to him. He wished to have the opinion of his physicians; he asked Bouvard whether his disease were curable. "*Sire*," said Bouvard, "*God is all-powerful.*" Then the King, with a gay and smiling countenance, said in the words of the prophet: *Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi, in domum Domini ibimus:* "I rejoiced at the things they have told me: we shall go into the house of the Lord." And, believing that he was to die on the following

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day, which was Friday, he immediately added: "O, the desirable, O, the agreeable news! O, the blessed day for me! this is indeed a lucky Friday! But this is not the first time that Fridays have been favorable to me. It was on a Friday that I ascended the throne, that I gained my first victory at Ponts-de-Ce, that I took the city of St. John d'Angely, and, finally, that I fought Soubisse at l'Ile de Re. But this one will be the happiest of all my life, since it will place me in heaven, there to reign eternally with my God." It was in these so Christian sentiments that this wise prince prepared to receive the last sacraments, and then to appear before God. He died at St. Germain en Laye, on the 14th of May, 1643.—GUILLOIS, *Explic. du Cat.*, 182.

256. *A Cow without Milk.*—Nothing is more common than to find superstition amongst persons who are not well instructed. I could prove this by a thousand examples. Here is a somewhat curious one. A superstitious countrywoman came one day to her parish priest and begged of him to tell her some way of curing her cow. "Ah, sir, if you only knew how much milk she used to give, but this while back she gives none at all. I think she must be bewitched." The priest, more anxious to cure the woman of her superstition than her cow of its supposed disease, gave her a sealed paper, and told her to be sure and go every night at ten o'clock, and touch the stable-door with her paper. The woman did exactly as she was told. The following night as she made her ac-

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customed rounds, she found the stable-door open, but she thought the servant must have forgotten to close it through mistake. Curious to see the effect of her remedy, she failed not to go next morning and milk the cow herself. Miracle! miracle! the poor beast gave her usual quantity of milk. The night following she repeated the ceremony, and this time the cow again gave milk in abundance. The third night, she found the stable-door shut; but, to her great surprise, she perceived in a corner the brother of her servant, who was trying to conceal himself, and appeared all ashamed for having been discovered. She then understood the whole mystery. She made up her mind to dismiss her servant next day, but the latter knowing what was in store for her had already taken her departure. Humbled and confused at this occurrence, the woman went to tell all to the priest, who said to her: "Well, my good woman, I hope you are now cured of your superstition. See here is what I wrote in your sealed paper: '*Sit up later in the evening, watch better by night, and the magic will all soon disappear.*'"—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 71.

257. *The Stolen Herd.*—It is a very singular thing, my friends, to see with what simplicity the ignorant adopt the most absurd notions in regard to superstition. One day, some adventurers addressed a young peasant who was herding swine, telling him that they had an excellent plan to prevent his herd, even in his absence, from scattering about, and being de-

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voured by wild beasts. These words strongly excited the herdsman's curiosity, for he would be well pleased to be able to go away now and then for a little relaxation. The strangers then showed him a little image of St. Blaise, and told him he had only to fasten that to his stick, and then plant it wherever he wished his swine to remain. The herdsman failed not to make the trial. The first and second time, having still some doubt as to the efficacy of the plan, he went but a short distance from his herd, and found nothing wrong on his return. Encouraged by this apparent success, and full of confidence in the virtue of his image, he planted his stick again, and went off to join some of his companions two or three miles away. He staid long without any uneasiness; but in the evening when he returned, he found that all his swine had vanished, and no trace of any of them could he find. The adventurers who had discovered to him their famous secret, had counted on his credulity; they had concealed themselves behind the bushes, and profited by the absence of the simple young herdsman to take away his swine.—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 64.

258. *The Lying Cuckoo.*—Poor people are sometimes found, dear children, who have more faith in omens and superstitious practices than in the teachings of religion, or even the simple dictates of common sense. I might quote many instances of this kind, but I shall content myself with the following, which will, perhaps, make you laugh, but may also

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serve you on occasion. An old woman was in her bed dangerously ill. Her daughter urged her to prepare for death by disposing herself to receive the last sacraments. The poor woman gave a deaf ear to this, saying that it was not necessary. The pious daughter then begged one of their neighbors to try her persuasions, too, in order to persuade her mother to receive the rites of the Church.—"Oh! pray, don't trouble yourselves," said the dying woman with a smile, "you need not fear for me; I shall not die of this sickness, for the cuckoo prophesied to me that I have yet twelve years to live!" Imagine, my dear children, the astonishment of those who heard her. She fancied that she had as many years to live as she had heard a cuckoo sing without interruption. Nevertheless, as her state grew worse and worse, her daughter sent for a priest. Alas! he found her senseless; all hope was lost, and this unhappy victim of the most ridiculous superstition had only strength enough to say now and then: *Cuckoo! Cuckoo!* She thus died without sacraments, leaving to all who witnessed the sad scene a salutary lesson on the dangers of superstition.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 62.

259. *The Sorcerer of Provins.*—It is often said that we live in an enlightened age, yet for all that, my young friends, there are a great many people who do not see very clearly. There was at Provins, in 1804, an individual named Lemoine, who passed for a famous soothsayer. He professed, by means of some ceremonies, to find treasures for any person who paid him

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a certain sum of money. First he asked twenty francs, then he gave a mystical book, which was to be signed by *the spirit*. But this spirit did not show himself without conditions; the first was to appear pure in his eyes, to fast, and have Masses said to the Holy Ghost. The second was to procure a goat, kill it with a steel knife, to cut off the skin in strips, which were to be laid around a field, and to burn the remains of the victim to ashes, which were then to be thrown into the air towards the rising sun. The third condition was to form a magic wand from a particular tree, by night, and by the light of several tapers made by the hand of a woman of Provins. After these minute preparations, the applicant might, with all safety, present himself to the spirit, who would sign the little book and give power to discover the treasures. A worthy man, named Suseau, poor in mind as in money, allowed himself to be fooled by the promises of Lemoine and his wife; he gave one hundred and thirteen francs to procure the goat, the steel knife, the tapers and the magic wand, and to have the Masses said; he also fasted for eight days, and presented himself with an empty stomach, but a head full of the fairest hopes. Lemoine told him to go back such a day, at such an hour. Suseau was as punctual as could be to his appointment, but he waited in vain for his conjurer. He ran to his house, but he was not there; he was in the country. Then Suseau saw at last that he had been made a fool of, and that Lemoine was nothing else than a rascally impostor.

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He lodged informations against him, and the rascal was sentenced with his wife to two years' imprisonment, also to restore the one hundred and thirteen francs and pay the costs of the trial.—GUILLOIS, *Explic. du C.M.*, II., 125.

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CHAPTER III.

SECOND COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain.

I.—ON THE OATH, AND PERJURY.

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260. *The Enemies of St. Narcissus.*—An oath is only to be taken for things just and true, when required by our lawful superiors, and on grave occasions. But one of the greatest crimes that could be committed is that of perjuring one's self. Three men had plotted the ruin of St. Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, and accused him publicly of a heinous crime. In order to give yet greater weight to their accusation, the first of them prayed that he might be burned alive, if he did not tell the truth; the second cried: "And that I may be seized with the most frightful malady, if I have spoken falsely;" finally, the third said: "That I may loose my sight, if my testimony is not true!" As for St. Narcissus, seeing that his influence was daily decreasing, under these degrading accusations, he quitted Jerusalem and retired into solitude. But let us see what happened. The three impostors did not escape the punishment

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they had voluntarily called down on themselves. The first was burned to death in a fire which broke out in his own house; the second saw himself covered with ulcers from head to foot, and his whole body became one mass of putrefaction. The third was so shocked by the terrible chastisement of his two companions that he repented, confessed his crime and completely exculpated the holy bishop. Nevertheless, the abundant tears he shed as the natural consequence of his repentance, made him afterwards lose his sight.—GODESCARD, *Vies des Saints*, 7th August.

261. *St. Eloi's Oath.*—We must abstain from swearing, that is to say, from taking an oath, unless when it is actually necessary. Some very pious persons make it a scruple of conscience to take an oath even when it would seem to be necessary. We cannot blame them, my dear friends, especially when we see so many others who take oaths with so little judgment or reflection. King Clotaire II., who reigned in France from 584 to 628, having heard of St. Eloi as a very upright man and a skilful goldsmith, had him brought to his court, which was then at Reuil, near Paris. After having admired the wisdom of his words, and the purity of his sentiments, he said to him: "I will keep you near my person, so that I may make your fortune; here are some relics of Saints, swear on them that you will be ever faithful to me." Hearing this proposal, so simple and so natural, St. Eloi was troubled; he promised Clotaire to be faithful to him, but he would not dare to take the oath on

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the holy relics, because it seemed to him that there was no necessity for so doing. The more the king insisted the more he excused himself, for fear of displeasing God. At last, the king was touched by the delicacy of his conscience; he approved of his refusal and told him: "I understand your refusal, and I honestly believe that your unwillingness to swear lightly is a much surer guarantee for your fidelity than all the oaths in the world.—D. GENEVAUX, *Histoires choisies.*

262. *A Perjurer's Morsel of Bread.*—Speaking of those tremendous oaths which are sometimes taken to affirm a falsehood or deny a truth, we find in the history of England an awful fact, which occurred in London, in the year 1051. One day when King Edward the Confessor was giving a grand banquet to the lords of his court, amongst the guests was seen Earl Godwin whom the public voice accused of the murder of Alfred, King Edward's brother. A young page, who was waiting at table, made a false step when presenting wine to the king; yet still he managed to avoid spilling any of the liquor. Then, in order to indicate that one of his feet had secured the other, the young man quoting some words from Holy Scripture said laughing: "It is true enough that *the brother who is supported by his brother, stands firm.*" These words recalled sad memories to King Edward's mind. "Ah!" said he, applying them to himself, "ah! if I had my brother Alfred still, how well we could assist each other!" Saying these words, Edward

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cast a scrutinizing look on Earl Godwin. The latter thinking to satisfy a prince so religious by a solemn oath, exclaimed: "May this morsel of bread be the last I shall eat, if I had any act or part in the murder of Prince Alfred!" The wretch! his imprecation was instantly heard: the bread stopped in his throat, and choked him, leaving the guests to consider whether the accident was a divine chastisement, or the natural effect of the culprit's agitation.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, IV., 339.

263. *The Refractory Priests.*—You have all heard of the Revolution, my young friends; but, perhaps, you may not be acquainted with the innumerable examples of virtue, of devotedness, of fidelity given at that unhappy period by thousands of priests, of religious, of citizens of all classes. *Refractory priests* was the name then given to those who had the courage to refuse taking oaths which their conscience did not justify them in taking. These generous confessors of the faith were nearly all banished, imprisoned, or even cruelly put to death. Four of them were going quietly to Havre to embark for England; a sentinel stopped them, demanding their passports. It was there stated that they were priests, and the oath was immediately proposed to them. "It is for refusing," said they, "to take that impious and execrable oath that we are now being banished from our country." The misguided populace then cried out: "They are refractory priests." And, falling on them, they killed the two first, who were priests of the

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diocese of Seez. The two others, belonging one to the same diocese, the other to that of Mans, are dragged to the river side. There, they are again summoned to take the oath, but they still reply: "Our conscience forbids it." They are thrown into the river; they rise to the surface of the water, and the people call out to them: "Swear, unhappy men, and you shall be taken out!" "No," cried the two martyrs, drowning in the river, "no, we cannot, we will not swear!" And when scarcely able to speak, they repeated: "We will not swear." At the sight of this invincible constancy, the spectators became furious with anger; arming themselves with pitch-forks, they applied them to the necks of the generous confessors, plunged them again into the water, and kept them there till they were dead. I know not, my dear friends, if the acts of any of the martyrs furnish examples of more insatiate fury on one side, or more heroic constancy on the other.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, IV., 359.

264. *The Dealer Struck Dead.*—When people have lost all scruples of conscience in matters of business, they sometimes have recourse, my dear children, to oaths and even imprecations, for the smallest trifle of money. I shall never forget the story of an unfortunate man of the department of la Sarthe or thereabouts, which furnished a salutary lesson to all who knew or heard of it. This man had bought a wretched cow at a fair, for next to nothing, and wanted to sell it again for an hundred francs. In order

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to make a show of being honest and disinterested he said to every one who presented themselves to buy the cow: "I tell you frankly now—for I don't want to deceive you,—this cow cost me ninety francs, and I only ask a hundred—that is little enough profit, you'll admit, for, you know, every one must live." "But did she really cost ninety francs?" "On my word she did, that I may die this moment if I don't tell you the truth!" He had scarcely uttered this horrible imprecation against himself, when he fell dead in the midst of the market-place and before a crowd of people. No one doubted but it was a judgment from Heaven; but it was made still more manifest when some hours after the original owner of the cow happening to pass that way, told the truth, that the unhappy dealer had only given him fifty francs, for the cow. Let us beware, my dear friends, of making use of such forms of expression as, *upon my word of honor*, and such like, so common in the mouths of persons who have little or no honor to pledge.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, IV., 340.

265. *About Two Walnut Trees.*—Most stories relating to swearers are fatal, my dear children; but here is one that seems still more tragical than the others. It happened some years ago in Belgium. Claude Guillemot, the father of five children, had a cottage near Tournay, and four acres of ground which he cultivated to advantage. He was a very irritable man, quarrelling with every one about him, and for the least things; when he once gave way to his pas

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sion, he broke and smashed all that came under his hand. He had a near neighbor, not quite so passionate as himself, but still not very agreeable. It happened that these two individuals had a dispute concerning two large walnut trees which separated their respective farms, and which each claimed as belonging to him. Claude Guillemot at first restrained himself so far as to consent to leave the matter to arbitration, but when it was decided that the walnut trees should belong to his neighbor, he became furious, swore to be revenged, and to burn his adversary's house. "This I swear to do," cried he, "and if I don't that God may open hell under my feet, and cast me into it!" He thus bound himself to commit a crime, and vowed himself to hell if he did not. His fit of anger once passed, however, he made this reflection: "If I am discovered, I shall be sent to end my days in the galleys; but, no matter for that, I have sworn to do it, and I'll keep my oath." A month after, when he thought no one would suspect him, he arose in the middle of the night, and lighting a bunch of matches, wrapped them in some light inflammable substance, then went on tiptoe and threw the whole on his neighbor's roof. The roof was made of straw, and soon took fire. Unhappily for the incendiary, as he hurried away he tripped over a stone, lost his balance, and fell with his head against the trunk of a tree, whereby he was knocked senseless to the ground. The fire made rapid progress. A black smoke ascended in dense masses from the

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burning house; the flames spread a lurid light around, and burning coals and sparks were carried to a great distance. The roof at last fell in, and all the inmates of the house perished, the victims of Claude Gaillemot's crime. As for him, he soon recovered from his stupor; but who can describe his feelings, when he saw his own dwelling in flames, and found himself surrounded by a multitude of people, all of whom accused him of being the cause of the disaster! His wife and children houseless, himself arrested, given up to justice, and finally sentenced to the galleys for life; these were the consequences of his having kept his wicked oath! He had sinned by taking it, and he sinned still more by putting it into execution.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, IV., 358.

II.—ON CURSING AND BLASPHEMING.

266. *The Blasphemies of Nicanor.*—The Sacred Scriptures relate the example of many blasphemers who were struck dead by the justice of God. Here is one which took place in the time of Judas Maccabeus. Demetrius, King of Syria, had charged Nicanor, one of the best generals of his States, to go and destroy the Temple of Jerusalem, and put all the Jews to death. This Nicanor, already the declared enemy of the Jews, proposed to himself to glut his hatred of that holy nation, and throw down their temple. He even dared to raise his sacrilegious hand over the house of the Lord, uttering the most horrible blas-

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phemies against God. Then the priests went to the Temple, prostrated themselves on the ground, and wept, saying: "Lord, Thou hast chosen this house that Thy name may be invoked therein; Thou wouldst have it become for the people a place of prayer and of grace! Revenge Thyself, then, on this impious man and his army; let him perish by the sword. Remember his blasphemies, and suffer him not to live any longer!" A prayer so full of faith and confidence could not fail to be heard. The valiant Judas Maccabeus arrived in front of the Syrians with his little army of three thousand men; he also prayed to the Lord in these terms: "Lord, Thou didst of old send Thine angel to smite the army of Sennacherib, when one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians perished in one night, strike to-day Thine enemies and ours!" After this brief exclamation, the two armies engaged, and, although Judas had only a handful of men in comparison with the Syrians, he was completely victorious. But what struck every one with the greatest terror was the sight of Nicanor, killed the very first. The soldiers, seeing the fate of their general, threw down their arms, and of thirty thousand men, not one remained. Judas caused the head and one arm of the blasphemer to be cut off and brought to Jerusalem; the arm was suspended before the temple, and the head was placed on the top of the citadel. The tongue which had uttered so many blasphemies was cut into small pieces, and given as food to birds. Sad, but just punishment of him who

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had committed such heinous crimes!—*II. Maccabees*, XIV.

267. *The Trial of Labarre, of Abbeville.*—There happened in the last century, my young friends, a very tragical event which I am going to relate to you; may it inspire you with all the horror of bad books which they deserve: A young gentleman of Abbeville, named John Francis Lefevre de Labarre, had had the misfortune to read some works of Voltaire, and had imbibed from them, as you may well imagine, the very worst sentiments. Not content with ruining himself he succeeded in seducing some other gentlemen of his own age. These wretches, mutually encouraging each other in crime, came at last to throw aside all decency and decorum: they uttered publicly the most horrible blasphemies against God, His holy religion, and all that is sacred in the world. Public morality was outraged, and the parliament of Paris caused these wretches to be arrested, tried, and condemned. Labarre especially, being the author of this frightful scandal, was treated with all the severity of the laws of France. By a warrant, dated the 4th of June, 1766, he was condemned to give satisfaction in the public street, to have his head cut off, and his body burned to ashes, together with the bad books from which he had drawn such pernicious doctrines. This sentence was executed to the letter; whilst the blasphemer stood to give public satisfaction to the outraged multitude, there was affixed to his person a placard bearing the inscription in large characters:

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IMPIOUS AND SACRILEGIOUS BLASPHEMER.

Once more, my dear children, let us beware of reading those vile books that would thus lead us to our ruin.—FELLER, *Biographie Universelle*, II., 82.

268. *A Curser and his* 487 *Beans.*—It is almost incredible, my young friends, how the habit of swearing, or making use of bad language, grows, when it is given way to. How many sins people then commit almost without perceiving them. Listen to a story I have heard on that subject. In England there is a law forbidding all kinds of swearing under a certain penalty. A man who was much addicted to that vice, being at table with some others, went on cursing and swearing as usual, without the least attempt to restrain himself. Every time he spoke he added an oath, or something equivalent thereto. On the following day he was summoned to the court without knowing for what. He had scarcely made his appearance in the hall, when he saw an individual take a little bag from his pocket and gravely count out some beans on a table. When he had finished, he said to the magistrate, "I hereby prove that this man whom you see before you, swore 487 times yesterday evening in such an inn." Being asked how he knew so exactly, he answered: "I chanced to have the left pocket of my coat full of beans yesterday, and when I perceived that this man cursed so often, I took it into my head to drop one into the other pocket every time he uttered an oath. In this

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way it was that I reckoned 487, and that number is under the truth, because my beans ran out, so that I was unable to continue my count." The accused could not, of course, deny the fact; he payed a large fine, reddened to the eyes with shame, and retired fully resolved to correct so shameful a habit.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 146.

269. *The Priest and the Swearing Carter.*—Is it not true, my dear friends, that nothing is more common than to hear carters, coachmen and people of that kind cursing and swearing? they often say when the remark is made to them, that their horses are so used to it that they will not go so well without it. One day, the pastor of a small country parish was walking along the road reading his breviary. All at once he heard one of his parishioners urging on his horses with voice and whip, and swearing like a trooper. The priest goes up to him and says: "Well! my good Francis, it appears your load is hard to pull."—"You may say that, father, especially for such wretched beasts as these."—"Nevertheless, friend Francis, I cannot think that any reason why you should curse and swear as you do." "Oh! it's easy seen, father, that you know little of driving, or you'd know as well as I do that the horses won't go at all without that."—"My good friend, you are entirely mistaken, and I will prove it to your satisfaction; give me your whip." So saying, the good priest puts his breviary in his pocket, takes hold of the whip, and gives the horses two or three good blows, crying

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as loud as he could: "Get along there, old horse!" The horses instantly started forward at so rapid a pace that Francis was obliged to run in order to keep up with them. The priest returned him his whip laughing: "Well! my good friend," said he, "you see horses can be made step out without cursing."—G. S. G.

270. *A Pupil of the Brothers in Namur.*—Young as you are, my dear little friends, you may sometimes prevent persons who are easily made angry from committing sin by uttering blasphemies or words injurious to the holy name of God. I will tell you a little story about one of your own companions which will, I know, interest you. He was a good little boy of ten or eleven years old, who went to school to the Brothers in Namur, a town in Belgium. One day, I believe it was in 1832 or '3, he gave a very touching proof of his faith. He got home from school a little later than usual, and his father being angry, began to scold him, swearing by the holy name of God. The poor child, shocked to think that he had involuntarily occasioned this blasphemy, threw himself on his knees before his father, and said to him: "My dear father, beat me if you choose, but do not, oh! do not profane the holy name of God!" The father was amazed, and seeing the horror which his child had of cursing, profited by the lesson, thanked him for reminding him of its wickedness, forgave him his fault, and from that time forward never dared to blaspheme. Ah! my young friends, how many sins

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might Christian children prevent their parents from committing!—Guillois, *Nouvelle Explic. du Cat.*, 186.

271. *The Blasphemer at the Tavern.*—It would be very easy for the good God to strike those wretches suddenly dead who dare to insult Him by their blasphemy; if He does not do so, it is because He exercises mercy and patience. Yet it has sometimes happened that unhappy persons, having carried their audacity to the highest pitch, have been punished even in this life. In the month of February, 1847, an instance of this kind occurred in France, in the Department of Lower Seine. Some persons were sitting at table in a tavern kept by a man named Sylvain Levaillant. Amongst the workingmen present there was one who kept swearing continually, more from custom, as it seemed, than from any bad intention. The tavern-keeper remonstrated with him several times in a friendly way, and his advice was taken in good part by the tradesman, who was not without some feelings of religion. But another, a weaver, named Huberel, desirous of showing off, as it were, before the others, spoke in his turn, and commenced by denying that there was a God; from that he proceeded to belch forth all sorts of blasphemies against Him and His religion. Levaillant endeavors to soothe away this frenzy by words of mild persuasion, but the weaver answers in a scoffing tone: "Your God! I will sup with Him to-night!" Alas! dear children, he had scarcely uttered this blasphemy when he fell on

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his face as if struck by lightning. They hastened to raise him up; the unhappy wretch was dead! You cannot conceive, I am sure, the terror of the spectators; no one doubted but this awfully sudden death was a punishment from Heaven.—Noel, *Cat. de Rodez*, IV., 336.

III.—ON VOWS.

272. *Jephtha's Vow.*—The first thing to be observed in making a vow is discretion. As we are not obliged to make a vow, dear friends, let us examine well, and weigh all things prudently, before making it. The most celebrated instance of a rash vow is that of Jephtha. That valiant Judge of Israel was at war with the Ammonites; he marched against them, and being unable to persuade their king to make peace, he prepared to offer them battle. His first care was to ask the assistance of Heaven; but in his imprudent zeal he made a vow, that if he gained the victory, he would sacrifice to the Lord the first who should come forth from his house to meet him on his return home. This was binding himself to do something, the exact nature of which he did not know. The battle was fought, and Jephtha was the victor; the same evening he returned in triumph to his dwelling. Alas! he little thought what was going to happen. His only daughter, a young girl of rare qualities, had no sooner heard of her father's victory, than she quickly assembles her companions and flies to meet him, singing, to the sound of cymbals and other

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instruments of music, canticles of joy and thanksgiving. As she walked at the head of the joyous band, she was the first whom Jephtha saw. At that sight the unfortunate father burst into tears, repenting, but too late, the imprudence of his rash vow. He then informed his beloved daughter of what he had promised the Lord; she submitted with a good grace and was herself the one to urge her father to accomplish his vow. Accordingly, after having spent two months in the mountains preparing herself for that great sacrifice, this generous daughter returned to her father who executed what he had promised. The Holy Scripture does not say exactly what he did; some of the Fathers of the Church are of opinion that he really immolated his daughter as a holocaust; but others maintain, with more probability, that he merely consecrated her to the Lord near the Ark of the Covenant. Whatever he did, dear children, Jephtha's vow was rash and indiscreet, and ought not to be imitated.—*Judges*, Chap. XI.

273. *An Idolator's Vow.*—Speaking of vows, my dear children, I am going to tell you the story of a young pagan Arab, mentioned in the life of St. Euthymius. Asphebetes, emir of the Arabs, had been charged by a wicked king of Persia, named Yezdegerd, who was then cruelly persecuting the Christians of his States, to guard the frontier, so as to prevent them from escaping. Asphebetes was a pagan, but he had some feelings of humanity. He was accused to the king, not only of not preventing the

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Christians from leaving Persia, but even of favoring their flight. As soon as the Arab emir was made aware of the fate which awaited him, he took with him his wife and children and all his goods, and escaped to the territory of the Roman Empire. This was about the year 420. He had a son named Terebon, who had been long a paralytic, and suffered much. One night, when pain prevented him from closing his eyes, he reflected that none but God could cure him, and although he, like his father, was a pagan, he made this vow within himself: "Great God of heaven and earth, if Thou curest me, I will become a Christian." A few minutes after, he fell into a calm sleep, in which he saw a venerable old man with a white beard, who asked him what it was that troubled him, and the young man told his story. "Well! do as thou hast promised," said the old man, "and thou shalt be cured; I am Euthymius, and I dwell in the desert, near the torrent of the mountain, between Jerusalem and Jericho; come to me there!" Terebon, as soon as he awoke, related to his father all that passed; they set out that very day, with a great number of other Arabs. When they reached the grotto where St. Euthymius was at prayer with his monks, Terebon recognized him as the old man with the white beard, and related to him what he had seen. The holy abbot recited a fervent prayer, made the sign of the cross on the paralytic, and he was instantly cured. Struck by this prodigy, the Arabs fell on their knees, adored the God of the Chris-

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tians, had themselves instructed, and were baptized some time after. I need not tell you, my young friends, that the one most eager to be baptized was he who had made the vow during his illness.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., p. 181.

274. *A Fowl Changed into Stone.*—One of the most extraordinary Saints who illustrated the 5th century was St. Simeon Stylite, a famous solitary of Syria. Not content with giving himself up to the austerities of the other religious, he would do something which had never been done before. He had a pillar erected some fifteen feet in height, ascended to its top by a ladder, and there remained for several years exposed to the inclemency of the weather in all seasons. You will easily understand, my dear children, that such an extraordinary mode of life, joined to the sanctity of Simeon, attracted an incredible number of visitors, who, from the foot of his pillar, begged the assistance of his prayers. Amongst the pious pilgrims who visited him, mention is made of an Arab, whose name I do not know, but who was so affected by the sight of what a Saint was doing to please God, that he wished himself to do something particular. He made a vow, in presence of Simeon and all who were there, never to eat anything that should have had life; thus, no meat, no fish, no eggs, not even milk food. It was a difficult vow to keep, my dear children, as you may well suppose, but this fervent Arab was for a long time faithful to it. I know not by what fatality he forgot himself so far as

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to kill a fowl himself, have it cooked and eat of it. It was an open violation of his vow, and so to say, a mockery of God, to whom he had made it of his own free will, and without instigation from any one. What was the consequence? God, knowing that he was at bottom a good Christian, contented Himself with giving him a warning capable of making him reflect. Scarcely had he eaten the first mouthful of the fowl, when all that remained in the dish became hard as stone, so that no one could break even the smallest piece from it. At first no one would believe such an extraordinary occurrence; people ran in crowds to convince themselves of it by their own eyes. The learned Theoderet, bishop of Cyr, in Syria, where it took place, states that he himself saw and touched this miraculous fowl. The poor Arab, to whom the circumstance occurred, was struck by the prodigy; he thanked God for having recalled him to a sense of his duty, and ever after scrupulously observed the vow he had made.—THEODORET, *Hist. Eccles.*, Chap. XXVI.

275. *St. Louis and his Little Cross.*—When we make a vow, my dear children, we ought to consider well what we are doing; but when once it is pronounced, we are not to be seeking idle pretexts for being dispensed from fulfilling it. St. Louis, that pious king of France, having fallen sick in 1244, at Paris, others say at Pontoise, it matters little which, was soon at the last extremity. Then it was that he made a vow if he recovered his health, to undertake a crusade to

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the Holy Land. When he was quite recovered, two months after, his first care was to accomplish his vow with all the strictness and fidelity that might be expected from such a Christian prince; and for that purpose he had a little red cross sewed in his upper garment. But then Queen Blanche his mother, the princes his brothers, the principal lords of his kingdom, and even the Bishop of Paris, sought by every means to make him change his purpose. They said to him: "My liege, what would become of your kingdom during your absence? Your health, too, is not yet quite restored, and you are much enfeebled by your late illness. Moreover, that vow which leads you to quit your own States is not strictly binding, seeing that you made it at a moment when your mind was necessarily affected by your severe malady; in any case, it will be easily commuted." "But are you very sure," asked St. Louis, "that my head was not right when I made this vow?" "Quite sure, my liege, and that is nothing strange, the same thing occurs to every one who is afflicted with fever." "In that case, here is my red cross," cried the king, tearing it from his shoulder. "But you will admit that I am now capable of understanding what I do." "Oh! perfectly, my liege!" "Well! I now make a vow with all my heart to go on a crusade to the Holy land; give me back my red cross!" And the holy prince had the cross sewed again on his shoulder, and continued with increased ardor his preparations for the crusade, no one daring after that

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to say a word in opposition to his pious design.—Pere Daniel, *Hist. de la France* IV., 381.

276. *The School of the English in Rome.*—There was formerly in Rome, my dear children, a church which was known by the singular title of the *School*, or *College of the English.* To the following cause it owed its origin, at least in part. Edward the Third, King of England, a pious and God-fearing prince, in acknowledgment of the graces he had received from Heaven, resolved to make a pilgrimage to Rome. But the lords of the kingdom and his best councillors, fearing that his absence might give occasion for some disturbance, prevailed upon him to change the object of his vow and arrange matters so that he should not be obliged to leave England. Edward was too conscientious to be guided solely by the advice of interested, or unenlightened persons; he consulted the Pope himself, who wrote to him: "Since England might be exposed to danger during your absence, we dispense you from the obligation which you have imposed upon yourself, and we enjoin you, instead of your pilgrimage, to give to the poor the money you would have spent in your journey, and to build or establish a monastery in honor of St. Peter, prince of the Apostles. Believe that these works will be acceptable to God, for He is always with those who invoke Him sincerely, wherever they may be found." This answer completely tranquilized the king; he distributed a large sum of money amongst the poor, established in honor of St. Peter,

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the famous Abbey of Westminster, and finally sent rich gifts to Rome. With the money sent by him was founded, or, at least, maintained for many years, the church mentioned above, which was named the *School of the English*.—Berault-Bercastel, *Hist. de l'Eglise*.

277. *A Pilgrim Instructed.*—That beautiful book the *Imitation of Christ*, which you, doubtless, read very often, my dear friends, says in one place that *pilgrimages seldom sanctify the soul, especially when they are undertaken in a spirit of lightness or curiosity.* I have read the story of an Austrian merchant which goes to prove the truth of this fact. This worthy man had religion, but he made it consist in practices of his own choice. He had made a vow to go every year, in the month of September or October, on a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Maria Zell, one of the most famous shrines of the Austrian empire; about 100,000 persons go thither every year. One pilgrim had already made that pious journey twelve years, although he had to travel full eighty miles. The last time he went, he met within a short distance of Maria Zell a peasant from a neighboring village, with whom he amused himself chatting. "You are very fortunate, you people hereabouts," said he, "to be so near Our Lady's shrine. You, at least, can go there often to pray."—"Oh sir, we don't go so often as you think. On working-days we must work, since God has allotted it for us; and on Sunday we must edify our parish, by assisting regularly at Mass and Ves-

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pers in our own church. You see, sir, it seems to me that the sheep ought always to be, as far as possible, around their pastor, and not go running here and there after pastors whom they don't know or who don't know them. If I have a few pennies to spare I give them to the poor, and every one is satisfied. But saying this, I don't mean to blame others; every one has their own devotion." These words were a source of reflection to the merchant. He remembered that, under pretence of making his pilgrimages, it often happened that he neglected his most sacred duties, missing Mass, refusing alms to the poor, &c. On his return he spoke of it to his parish priest who, in fact, advised him to become a fervent and exemplary Christian, and to spend in alms and in good works the money he employed, every year, in making a pilgrimage which sanctified him so little.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 185.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

Remember that Thou Keep Holy the Sabbath Day.

278. *How the Jews Observed the Sabbath.*—You know, my good friends, that before the coming of Our Lord, the Jews sanctified the Saturday instead of the Sunday, in commemoration of the fact that God, after having created the world in six days, rested on the seventh. That day was called the Sabbath, and no work of any kind was permitted to be done on that day; they could neither travel, nor work, nor pick up wood in the fields, nor even kindle a fire to prepare their meals; all that was done on the evening, or rather the morning before. It is true this was easier for them to do than it would be for us, and for this reason. In our country the custom is to begin the Sabbath, like other days of the week, at midnight, and also to end it at midnight; whilst the Jews began theirs on Friday, at six o'clock in the evening. In that way, it was easy for them to prepare before six o'clock the food for that evening and

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the next day. They were so strict in observing the repose of the Sabbath, that a man who dared to employ that holy day in gathering sticks in the fields, was condemned to be stoned to death by the people. But the most interesting fact which I can remember is this: Demetrius, king of Syria, being at war with the Jews, in the time of the brave Judas Maccabeus, sent against them his general, Nicanor, their most implacable enemy. The latter did not spare them in any way, and prepared to attack them on the very Sabbath day. Some Israelites, whom the calamities of the time kept in his army, represented to him that it was wrong for him to violate the Lord's Day. "And who is this powerful God who commands the day to be respected?" "My lord, he is the living God, the Master of heaven." "Well! if the Master of heaven forbids you to fight, I, who am master here on earth, command you to take up arms, and march." What happened, my dear friends, to this blasphemer, I think I have already told you: he have battle, and although he had an immense army, he was routed completely, and perished himself in the combat.—*Numbers*, Ch. xv.; II. *Maccabees*, xi.

279. *The Martyr of Sunday.*—It is no uncommon thing, my dear friends, to find persons who call themselves Christians, and who, nevertheless, on the slightest pretence, dispense with the sanctification of Sunday. A journey, an occupation, sometimes, I am ashamed to say, even a walk, or a mere party of pleasure, are to them sufficient reasons for violating

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the most sacred of duties. The first Christians were of a different way of thinking, as you may see from the following incident: In 304, being the time of the famous persecution of the Emperor Dioclesian, a young woman of Thessalonica, notwithstanding the severity with which the edict of persecution was carried out, prepared to sanctify the Sabbath, and left her home to repair to the house where the Christians assembled in secret. Just as she passed the gate of the city, called Cassandra Gate, she was stopped by one of the Emperor's soldiers, who said to her: "Whither goest thou? Remain here." The pious girl, whose name was Anysia, frightened at his brutality, and fearing to yield to any temptation, answered not a word, but made the sign of the cross on herself. The soldier treated her still more rudely, and asked her again: "Who art thou? Whither goest thou?" "I am a Christian, a servant of Jesus Christ, and I am going to the assembly of the faithful." "Ha! thou art going to the assembly of the faithful—I shall see that thou goest not thither. Come with me, instead, and offer sacrifice to our gods; to-day we are just adoring the sun." So saying, the brutal fellow tore off the veil with which, through modesty, she kept her face covered. But St. Anysia, being angry, said to him: "Go, wretch, Jesus Christ will punish thee!" The soldier, in a rage, pierced her through with his sword, and she fell, bathed in her blood. She thus went to celebrate the Lord's Day with the angels in heaven. She is

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honored on the 30th of December.—D. GENEVAUX, *Histoires choisies.*

280. *A Woman who Forgets to Close her Door.*—God grants us six days in the week to attend to our labors and our interests, it is only just that the seventh, which He has reserved for Himself, should be wholly consecrated to Him. Listen to the extent to which the Christians of the first ages acquitted themselves of that duty. Under the Emperor Valens, the protector of the Arians, there was in the city of Edessa, in Mesopotamia, a great number of Christians. The Emperor had decreed that all the Catholic churches should be closed, but the faithful assembled on Sunday, outside the city, to assist at the divine offices. The Emperor being informed of it, was very angry, and ordered that all the Catholics who still assembled should be put to death. Modestus, prefect of the city, less barbarous than Valens, secretly warned the Christians not to go to the place where they were accustomed to pray, because he had orders from the Emperor to massacre without mercy all who should go there. But see, dear friends, what duty is, the Christians were only the more eager to be at their place of meeting, and on the following Sunday, the assembly was more numerous than ever. The prefect knew not at first what part to take; but not to disobey the Emperor's orders, he marched with his soldiers against these generous Christians; but he took care to charge the people of his suite to make an extraordinary noise, so as to

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alarm the Christians and induce them to fly. On his way through the city, he saw a poor woman who was leaving her house in such haste that she did not take time to close the door; she held a child by the hand, allowing her long cloak to trail on the ground, instead of wrapping it round her after the manner of her country. She passed through the file of soldiers who were marching before the prefect, and then began to run as fast as she could. Modestus caused her to be stopped and asked her where she was going so fast. "I am hurrying," said she, "to the place where the Catholics are assembled." "Do you not know, then, that the prefect is going there on purpose to put all those whom he finds in it to death?" "I know it very well, and it is just for that reason I am hurrying, because I am afraid of losing the opportunity to suffer martyrdom for my religion." "But why do you take the child thither?" "In order that he may have a share in the same glory as his mother." The Prefect Modestus, amazed at the courage of this holy woman, returned immediately to the Emperor's palace, and, after relating what he had seen, prevailed upon him to renounce a project so cruel and so disgraceful. See, my dear friends, what an ascendancy virtue has, even over those who are base enough to persecute it. —NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, V., 39.

281. *What Befel a Peasant, Working on Sunday.*— God does not always punish in this life Christians who outrage Him by the violation of the Sunday; sometimes, nevertheless, he has visited them with

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temporal punishments, either to bring them to repentance, or to serve as a warning for those who might be tempted to imitate them. St. Gregory, a celebrated bishop of Tours in the sixth century, relates that a laborer of Auvergne, having yoked two oxen to his plough, feared not, to the great scandal of his neighbors, to go work in his field on the Sabbath day. Whilst employed at this forbidden work his ploughshare broke. Instead of desisting from his criminal undertaking, he took his axe to mend it; it was then that God punished him in a most remarkable manner. He permitted that the laborer's hand should close convulsively on the handle of the axe. Notwithstanding all that could be done to take the axe from his hand, it remained the same, so that for two whole years the unhappy man bore that visible mark of the wrath of God. But at length, at the end of that time, he conceived the happy idea of going to pray in the church of the famous martyr, St. Julian, at Brioude, now in the Department of the Upper Loire. He passed in prayer the night between Saturday and Sunday, according to the custom of that time, and, on the following day, in presence of all the people, his hand was cured; it opened miraculously of itself and let fall the piece of the axe-handle which for two years had remained in its grasp. This striking example of Divine chastisement encouraged all those who knew of it to continue sanctifying the Lord's Day in the best way they could.—St. Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs*, Book II., Chap. 11.

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282. *Boats Burned on Sunday.*—Let us beware, my dear friends, of violating the sanctity of the Sabbath by forbidden works; bad would come of it sooner or later. Let us remember, on the contrary, the words of *Father Bonaventure:* "Sunday work never made any one the richer." Here is a story about that. One Sunday, Father Christopher, a very zealous missionary, being in one of the Marianne Islands in Oceanica, was passing along by the seashore going to visit a sick person. He was astonished to find some savages who were already baptized, employed in mending their boats. "What are you about, my dear children?" said he, "are there no other days in the week for you to do this work? Tell me why it is that you thus transgress the law of the Great Spirit, who commands us to sanctify the Sunday by abstaining from all servile work, and employing it in the holy exercises of Christian piety?" They answered shortly that such was their will. The Father, seeing them ill disposed, and being in a hurry to go visit the sick person, went on his way; but, a few hours after, when on his return, he passed by the same place, he found there only a heap of smoking rubbish; fire had reduced to ashes the boats and the shed in which they were being repaired. He had no trouble then in making the refractory savages understand how wrong it was for them to despise the precept of the Lord. He left them covered with confusion, and ex-

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hibiting the greatest signs of true repentance.—Noel, *Cat. de Rodes*, V., 21.

283. *The Master-Builder of Fontainebleau.*—You sometimes see poor workmen, servants, or laborers who are full of heart, who have good religious sentiments, and yet are obliged to work on Sunday, because of the barbarous requirements of their masters or employers. Oh! but these masters and employers will have a terrible account to render to God! I remember a fine anecdote on that subject, which is found in the life of the virtuous Mary Leczinska, wife of Louis XV., and Queen of France. One Sunday when she was at Fontainebleau, she learned that some men were at work on a public building, although positively forbidden to do so by the king, who had sent one of the gentlemen of the chamber to them with a message to that effect. The pious princess, quite scandalized, sent immediately for the master-builder, and asked him why he thus dared to disobey God and the king. The man stammered out something by way of excuse, and said that as soon as he received the king's message he ordered his men to work more privately. "Besides," added he in a low voice, "as it is a public building I have in hands, I counted on having the men work on Sundays, as otherwise I should not be able to have my contract finished by the appointed time, and would, therefore, lose three thousand pounds." "There, then," said the Queen, "is your three thousand pounds; go immediately and dismiss your men, and

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see that you do not again make engagements which you cannot fulfil without violating the law of God and that of the State." What generosity was there, my young friends! and also what piety and zeal for the sanctification of the Sabbath. How many others would have seen that violation of the Sabbath, and given themselves no trouble about it.—REYRE, *Anec. Chret.*

284. *Thirty Thousand Francs' worth of Jewels.*—Of two merchants, one of whom closes his shop on Sundays and goes to Mass, whilst the other buys and sells as on week-days, which is he who best deserves our confidence? My dear friends, I am going to tell you. When the Allies, that is to say the Austrians, Russians, and Prussians, invaded France in 1814, they made a considerable stay in the country, and especially in Paris; some of them availed themselves of the opportunity of purchasing some of those rare and costly works of art for which France is so famous. A wealthy Prussian officer, amongst others, wished to buy jewels for a large amount. He presents himself one Sunday to one of the first jewellers in the city. "Sir, I should like to see some of the finest ornaments you have in gold and jewels." "I can let you see them, sir, but I cannot sell them to you to-day." "You cannot? and why not, pray?" "Because my stores and workshops are always closed on Sundays, and I would not, on any account, depart from that rule." "Sir, I understand your Catholic scruples, but I leave the city to-

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morrow, and if you will not sell me the jewels, I must go elsewhere." "I cannot help it." "Well! sir, I have but one word to say, and perhaps it may help you to a decision: I intend to purchase jewels to the amount of twenty-five or thirty thousand francs." "You do me wrong, sir, if you imagine that that sum will tempt me; it is, undoubtedly, a fine offer, but I confess I like better to remain faithful to my religious principles." "In that case, sir, as my departure is fixed for to-morrow, I am forced, however much I may regret it, to purchase of some one else what you refuse to sell me." So saying, the officer bowed and withdrew. He had only gone a little way when a thought occurred to him: "Now here is a jeweller who is very strict in observing the Sabbath, and his strictness annoys me not a little; but if this man has firmly refused to sell me his jewels for any amount of money, I have good reason to believe that he would not deceive me in the price, weight, or value of his costly wares; whilst another that will not hesitate to sell on Sunday for the sake of making money, will not scruple to cheat me in his merchandise." Struck by this reflection the officer returns home, relates what had happened, puts off his journey for one day, and going on the morrow to the honest jeweller, with some others of his friends, they made purchases to the amount of forty or fifty thousand francs. What do you say to that, my young friends?—G. S. G.

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285. *The Blast of God's Justice.*—Yet another example of the justice of God on the profaners of His holy day; it happened only a few years since. A miller of the parish of St. John de Courcoue, in the Department of the Lower Loire, being possessed by the demon of avarice, scarcely ever failed to work on Sunday, in order to make a trifle more money. Often during Grand Mass or Vespers he would set his wind-mill a-going. One holiday of obligation, instead of going to church, he spent the whole morning working; and so on till noonday. Seeing that he did not go home to his dinner, his wife became uneasy and, late in the afternoon, went to seek him. She found him lying dead on the ground, one whole side of his body pierced by the wings of his mill. He left his house in the morning, complaining that there was no wind; he had even added: "Still I'll go and put the mill in order, so that I may be ready for the first breeze." He waited there several hours; he saw all the people going to church, but he hid himself, for he knew well that he was doing wrong. When they had all passed, he came down. Standing near the mound, he looked up at the clouds to see if the wind were going to rise. Suddenly there came a gust which only turned the mill once; but that once was fatal to him, for the extremities of the wings struck the unhappy miller in the side, and the breath of wind died out as soon as the profaner of the Sabbath had been thrown in a dying state full twenty paces from the spot where he had stood. There it

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was that his poor wife found him stiff dead.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, V., 21.

286. *The Seven Gold Pieces.*—Nothing is more odious, my dear children, than the ingratitude and injustice of those who having received from God the six working days of the week, refuse to consecrate the seventh to Him. This we clearly see from the following little story which I read some time ago in a weekly paper: A peasant was ridiculing his neighbor because he would not, like himself, work occasionally in the fields on Sunday, but endeavored, on the contrary, to sanctify the Lord's Day by assisting at the several offices of the Church. "Suppose," said the neighbor, with a view to enlighten and convince him, "suppose I have seven gold pieces in my pocket, and that, meeting a man on the road, I give him six of them, what would you say to that?" "I would say that you were very generous, and that the man who was lucky enough to find you so would owe you a debt of gratitude." "Very well; but suppose, instead of that, he knocked me down and robbed me of the one gold piece I had kept for myself, what would you say then?" "The wretch! hanging would be too good for him!" "Yet, my friend, it is your own story; you are that man: God has given you six days to work for your living, He has only reserved the seventh for Himself, and He commands us to keep it holy; but you, instead of being grateful for His gifts, and respecting His will, rob Him of the

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seventh day. Don't you think it is just the same case?" The peasant acknowledged his fault, and avoided it for the future.—*Daily Rewards*, No. CXIX., p. 5.

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CHAPTER V.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

Honor thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long in the land.

I.—DUTIES OF INFERIORS.

287. *Cham, Cursed by his Father.*—The most ancient example related in detail in the Holy Scripture, touching the respect due to fathers and mothers, is that of the children of Noah. After the Deluge, which he had miraculously escaped with his family, Noah applied himself to till the ground, and planted the vine, to eat of its fruit. At the end of some years, when the grape was come, he conceived the idea of pressing out its juice; he drank of it without knowing its strength, and found himself overcome by the vapors of that new wine. He retired to his tent and was soon fast asleep. It was at that moment that Cham, his second son, having entered Noah's tent, perceived him in that state, and was so wicked as to make a jest of it. He goes quickly in search of his two brothers, Sem and Japhet, tells them what he had seen, and tries to make them accomplices in his improper conduct. But Sem and Japhet were

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careful not to fail in the respect they owed to their father; on the contrary, they took a cloak, softly entered the tent where Noah slept, and covered him with true filial care. The holy patriarch on awaking, learned what had passed; in God's name, he praised Sem and Japhet, and promised them the blessing of Heaven. As for Cham, he severely censured his conduct, and as he could not curse him himself, because God had already blessed him in person on their leaving the Ark, Noah heaped terrible maledictions on Chanaan, his eldest son. It was fitting that he who had no respect for his father, should himself be punished in his children.—*Genesis*, Chapter IX.

288. *The Cook who Left off Cooking.*—Obedience to superiors, my dear friends, is better than all that one could do, following merely their own will. A somewhat amusing anecdote occurs to me in this connection; I read it in the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert, where we find many such. St. Pacomius, abbot of the famous monastery of Tabenna, in the Thebaide, visiting one day the other houses governed by him, arrived at one, the name of which I do not remember. As soon as he entered, the abbot, the monks, and all the other members of the community, hastened to gather round him to do him honor. Amongst the inmates of the house were some children who were boarders, being brought up in the fear of God and in the practice of the virtues proper to their age. One of them, with the simplicity of a child, said to St. Pacomius, as soon as he saw him

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"Ah! father, you do well to come, for we have had very little to eat since your last visit; there is nothing cooked for us any more in the kitchen." "Never mind, my dear child, I will take the matter in hands, and see if we cannot have something cooked for you." Thereupon the holy abbot sent for the cook, and asked him how it was that he no longer cooked either vegetables or any other food for the monks. "Father, I did so for some time, but I soon observed that these good brothers touched nothing that was cooked; they contented themselves with olives, or some other fruit, and took nothing else. Then I began to think that it was no use cooking for nothing, and, as the young brother who assists me was quite able to do all that was necessary for the refectory and the kitchen, I employed myself in making mats like the other religious." "And how many have you made since then?" "Father, I have made about five hundred." "Bring them hither, that I may see them." "There they are, father!" No sooner had St. Pacomius seen the fine pile of mats than he ordered it to be set on fire; turning, then, to the negligent cook, he said to him, with visible emotion: "I despise all that you have done, because you have acted contrary to the obedience due your superior. You were charged with preparing food for the brethren; it was your duty to have done so with the utmost care. If they are mortified, and do not touch what you have cooked, it is their business; yours is to practise obedience." After this reprimand all went

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on smoothly as before, because obedience was faithfully practised.—D. Genevaux, *Histoires Choisies.*

289. *The Pupil Seated, and the Master Standing.*—There are few facts relating to education so well and deservedly known, my dear children, as the history of St. Arsenus, preceptor of the Emperor Arcadius. It happened in this way: The Emperor Theodosius the Great, a prince as Christian as he was able and astute, having decreed, according to the custom of those times, the title of *August* to his eldest son, named Arcadius, who was yet but six years old, thought of giving him a worthy and capable preceptor. He found none who united these two qualities in a higher degree than St. Arsenus, deacon of the Church of Rome. He had him come to Constantinople, in 383, and confided to him the education of the young prince. Arsenus neglected nothing, you may be sure, that would make him an accomplished young man, not only in the talents and acquirements suitable for the presumptive heir of the empire, but also and much more in the virtues which make the good Christian. When placing him under his care, Theodosius said,—and his words are very remarkable, and may, to a certain extent, be applied to you, my dear children, in relation to your teachers: "Henceforth you shall be his father much more than I myself." One day, the emperor having entered the chamber where St. Arsenus was instructing the young prince, was much surprised to find the master respectfully standing, whilst the pupil remained sitting.

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He could not help expressing his astonishment to St. Arsenus: "You are wrong," he said, "to act thus; my son is undoubtedly *August*, he is presumptive heir to the Crown, but you are none the less his master and his preceptor. I insist on it, then, that for the future you remain seated, and that he stands uncovered to hear you. As for you, my dear Arcadius, you will not be truly worthy of reigning, unless in so far as you know how to unite in your person *science and virtue*."—D. GENEVAUX, *Hist. Chois.*

290. *The Accursed Children.*—You remember the appropriate terms in which the Fourth Commandment, that we are now explaining, is conceived. Therein God promises rewards, even temporal, to those children who faithfully observe it; but that likewise supposes that He punishes, sometimes even in this life, ungrateful and unnatural children. St. Augustine relates a terrible example of the kind. Here is the fact: Ten children of the same mother, of rather distinguished birth, of whom seven were sons and three daughters, lived at Cesarea, in Cappadocia, with their mother, who was a widow. It happened one day that the eldest of the brothers loaded his mother with abuse, and had even the impudence to lay hands upon her and strike her. All the others, instead of reproving and stopping him, gave themselves no trouble about the treatment their brother gave his mother. The woman, outraged by the unnatural conduct of her children, went early the next morning to the baptismal font, and there, pros-

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trate on the ground, she prayed God that they might be made an example to all the earth, and that they might wander on the face of it, stricken by divine justice. Her prayer was immediately heard, and all her children were punished by God with a horrible shaking of all their limbs; so that being ashamed to appear in that frightful state before their own country-people, they wandered abroad over nearly all the different countries of the Roman Empire. "Two of those children," says St. Augustine, "came to Hippo, where we were; one was called Paul, and the other, his sister, was named Palladia. They arrived in that city about fifteen days before Easter, and they went every day to the church, where they prayed before the altar of St. Stephen, that it might please God to have mercy upon them, and restore them to their former state. On Easter Sunday, when the church was crowded with people, the young man was saying his prayers, when he suddenly fell on the ground as though he were asleep, yet without trembling, as he usually did during his sleep. All present were surprised, and still more so when they saw him arise without trembling any more, because he was perfectly cured. The crowded church immediately resounded with the praises and thanksgivings returned to God for this miracle." "This young man dined with us," adds St. Augustine, "and told us exactly the whole story of his disgrace and that of his brothers and sisters. On Easter Tuesday I caused him to go up into the tribune with his sister, that the people

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might see them both while the history of their adventure was read. Every one was witness that the brother stood without any unnatural motion, whilst the sister, on the contrary, trembled in all her members. But she had no sooner descended from that elevated place, than she also went to pray in the chapel of the holy martyr Stephen, first of the seven deacons. There she fell, like her brother, into a sort of sleep, and arose perfectly cured. The entire church re-echoed again with cries of joy and admiration; the girl was once more made to ascend the tribune, and the people praised God anew for having restored her to the same state as her brother." Such is the story related by the holy doctor, a frightful story and very capable, dear friends, of restraining us within the limits of the love and respect we ought to have for our fathers and mothers.—St. Augustine, *City of God*, Book II., Chapter 8.

291. *The Good Son and the Bad Father.*—It sometimes happens, my very dear children, that a son, by his good conduct, mildness, and submission, may at last win over a father or a mother who had long appeared insensible. I have known several who were thus converted by means of children quite young; here is a story of the kind, and an old story, too, for it goes back to the seventh century. A worldly man, living in Egypt, had several children, whom he brought up badly, and did not always edify by good example. Nevertheless, the eldest of his sons, named Abibe, had the happiness to escape this bad educa-

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tion; he was so wise, so virtuous, so faithful to all his duties, that his brothers almost hated him. But it was especially his father who abused him in every way, and went so far as to reproach him with his meekness, his sobriety, and other virtues, so true it is that people know neither what they say nor what they do, when they allow themselves to be blinded by passion or prejudice. Abibe bore all with patience, and only returned kindness and attention for the bad treatment he received from his father and his brothers. When his father was about to die some one who loved Abibe requested him to pardon that virtuous son, and not to disinherit him. The dying man made no answer, but he sent for his eldest son. At first every one thought that it was only to make another painful scene for him, but what was their surprise when they heard the father say with much gentleness: "My dear son Abibe, forgive me all the bad treatment I have so long given you! I was wrong, I now see plainly. Pray to God that He, too, may pardon me; you did your duty, but I did not do mine." He then turned to his other children, and said to them: "My children, I am going to die, but Abibe will be a father to you; I leave him the disposal of all I possess; for whatsoever he does, will be well done." He died soon after, and it was not long before his son followed him to receive in heaven the crown he so well deserved.—Mosch, *Spiritual Meadow*, Chap. 61.

292. *Where will he put his Father?*—Respect for

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our fathers and mothers, my dearest children, is something so natural that the most barbarous men and the most savage nations have had the same idea of it as the ablest philosophers. Here is an extremely curious proof of this: There is told of the pacha Djezzar, a famous Turkish tyrant, who terrified all Syria by his crimes from 1775 to 1804, an anecdote which proves that he had not totally abjured the sentiments of humanity. This incident, quite interesting in its way, is, moreover, a good lesson for unnatural sons. A young Christian, in whom Djezzar took some interest, was soon to be married. The best room of the house in which he dwelt was on the second story; it was occupied by his father, a man venerable by his age and entitled to respect on account of his infirmities. To please his future wife, the young man civilly asked his father to give up his room to her for some weeks, promising to give it back to him a little after the marriage. The father consented, and went down to the ground-floor, which was neither healthy nor agreeable. At the end of a month, he asked his room back, but they begged him to leave it a little longer. He consented, but when he came to ask it at the appointed time, his son refused to give it up, and went even so far as to abuse his poor father. The whole neighborhood was indignant at this proceeding. Djezzar is informed of it by his spies; he sends for the son and receives him before the assembled divan. "Of what religion art thou?" said the angry pacha. The terrified young

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man made no answer. The pacha repeats his question; then he answers that he is of the Christian religion. "Indeed? Well! make the Christian's sign." The culprit made the sign of the cross without saying anything. "Pronounce the words." *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.* And so saying, he, of course, raised his right hand as usual to his forehead, then to his chest, and so on. "Ah!" cried Djezzar in a terrible voice, "so the father is above, and the son below? Go, wretch, to thy house, and if it is not so there in a quarter of an hour, thy head shall soon roll in the dust." It is unnecessary to say that the young man went to ask his father's pardon, and made haste to restore order in his house, because he knew that Djezzar's threats were not idle ones.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, V., 131.

293. *The Legacy of a Deceived Father.*—Take care, my young friends, never to forget your duties in regard to your parents, to whom you owe, so to say, all that you have and all that you are. Listen to a curious story on this subject: A rich old man, named Conaxa, had been so imprudently kind as to divide his wealth between his two sons during his own lifetime. He too soon perceived that they had no longer the same respect for him that they used to have; they were not ashamed even to tell him frequently that he was living too long, and that they considered him a burden. The unhappy old man, in despair at such base conduct, on the part of children

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for whom he had done so much, asked advice of a sincere friend, whom he still had. "You have done very wrong, my dear friend, in acting as you did; nevertheless, there is one way of extricating yourself. Contrive to make your children believe that there are some debts still owing to you. You understand?" Accordingly, some days after, whilst Conaxa was at table with his two sons, a farmer comes in to pay him, as he said, *the remains of an old debt.* It was a big bag of silver lent him by his friend. Conaxa did not seem at all surprised, took the bag, put it away to count over at his leisure, gave the farmer something to drink, and gave not the slightest reason to suspect the trick he was playing. No sooner did his sons find out that he had not divided all his wealth between them, than they immediately became as kind and attentive as they had before been harsh and uncivil. Conaxa died some years after, leaving a heavy box which his greedy heirs hastened to open. What did they find in it, my dear friends? Bags full of stones and pebbles, with a little note to the following effect: "*I bequeath these stones to stone fathers who divide their wealth amongst their children before their death.*" I leave you to guess who found themselves fooled and over-reached; did not the two ungrateful sons well deserve it?—FILASSIER, *Dictionaire historique d'Education*, I., 138.

294. *The Magazine of Grenelle.*—Abbe Carron, in his work on education, relates a very beautiful instance of the love of a son for his mother. I am go-

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ing to tell it to you, my young friends, in order to induce you to do something similar, should the opportunity offer, to prove your affection for your good parents. In 1794, on the 31st of August, a frightful disaster occurred at Grenelle, near Paris. A powder-magazine, which contained an immense quantity of gunpower, suddenly exploded. It shook Paris and its suburbs like an earthquake; but its effects were horrible in Grenelle, where nearly 2,000 persons are said to have been killed. The whole neighborhood was thrown into consternation, and each one trembled for those near and dear to them. A boy of 12 years old, who was boarding three miles away from there, and whose mother resided at Vaugirard, only a little way from Grenelle, was so frightened by this disaster that he ran on foot, without a hat, and half naked, to make sure that his mother still lived. It seemed to his troubled imagination that he was every moment going to see her disfigured corpse. But, oh happiness! the first person he met at Vaugirard was that good mother. He throws himself into her arms, covers her with tears and kisses, presses her to his heart, and all that without being able to utter a single word, so much was he overcome with joy. After resting himself for a few moments, and wiping away the sweat that streamed from every part of his body, he remembered that he had left the school without telling any one, and thought he must return immediately He hastily takes some refreshment, and hurries back to tell his teachers why he had gone home without

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permission. Alas! my friends, it was God's will to reward him immediately for his filial love; arriving at the school, he is seized with fever, goes to bed, and expires a few days after, sincerely regretted by his teachers, and still more so by his mother, whom he had loved so tenderly.—GUILLOIS, *Explic. du Cat.*, 207

295. *A Grandfather's Sheets.*—God is just, my friends, and if He rewards even in this life, children who faithfully discharge their duty to their good parents, in like manner He often permits those who have failed in duties so sacred, to be themselves ill treated by their own children. Listen to what I am going to tell you. In a small town of Germany, the name of which I do not know, there lived a good old man who was entirely dependent for support on a son who had been married several years. But alas! this unnatural son, in concert with his wife, finding doubtless that *the old father*, as he was not ashamed to call him, was too burdensome to them, took steps to get him into an hospital so as to have no more trouble with him. The good old man, on leaving the house where he had spent so many happy years, could not help shedding tears; but his son remained cold and impassible. Some days after, the father sent to ask him at least for a pair of sheets, so as to make him a little more comfortable in the hospital. The wicked man took the worst he could find, gave them to his little boy nine or ten years old, and said to him: "Here, take these to your grandfather in the hospital, and tell him not to trouble us any more." The

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little fellow set out, but his father, who watched him, perceived that he stopped a long time behind a pile of faggots at the lower end of the yard. When he came back, he asked him what he was doing behind the faggots. "Why, father, I was hiding away one of those bad sheets amongst the faggots, so that some day when you go to the hospital, I'll not have to give you one of my good ones." These words were like a thunderbolt to the unhappy father; he understood his crime, and went himself, without delay, to bring his poor father back from the hospital, and took the greatest care of him till he died, so that his children might one day treat him the same.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 275.

296. *The Poor Woman's Arm-chair.*—Here, my good friends, is one of the prettiest stories I know about filial affection. In a little village in the South of France, there lived a poor old woman so infirm that she could not even rise; every day she had to be lifted out of her bed and placed in her arm-chair. She was very resigned and bore her sufferings patiently for the love of God. Nevertheless, there was one day of the week on which she suffered more than the others, it was Sunday, during divine service. As often as she heard the church-bells she began to sigh and moan, crying with the tears in her eyes: "Oh how happy I should be, if I could only go to church to hear Mass! Alas! why is it that I am so helpless?" So saying, she lovingly kissed the cross of her beads, and then continued to say them all the time her

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children were at church. She had two sons already grown up, who were fine athletic young men. They would have been well pleased to see their mother able to go to Mass, as she so ardently desired, but they had no means of accomplishing that object, so it was no use thinking of it. Yet see, my children, how ingenious love is; they found a way to do it; and what do you think it was? You would like to know, would you not? They took their good mother out of bed, placed her in her arm-chair, fitted two sticks to it, something like a hand-barrow, and set out in triumph for the church. But that is not all. No sooner was this touching act of theirs noised abroad, than the whole village would fain see it; the people stationed themselves in crowds along the street by which the good woman had to pass, they even strewed flowers before her as she went, and respectfully accompanied her to the church. Mass begins; after the Gospel, the priest ascends the pulpit, and instead of preaching the sermon he had prepared, he commenced by saying: "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land." Every one was so affected, my dear friends, that I cannot tell you who was the happiest, the good woman, or her two sons, the pastor, or the people of the village. It was truly a touching and beautiful sight.—GUILLOIS, *Nouvelle Explic. du Cat.*

297. *How Much I Cost my Parents.*—Never, my dear children, can you know all you cost your good parents, and never can you repay them, either, all

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that they have done for you. Here is a little problem. One day, in 1832, I think it was, Mgr. Augustine Gruber, Prince Archbishop of Salsburg, in Austria, visited the girls' school of a village in the Tyrol. He addressed himself to one of the children, who might be ten years old, and knew how to count well: "Tell me, my dear child, how much do you think you have already cost your parents?" "I don't know, my lord; they didn't tell me." "Well! let us make this little calculation together. Do you think it cost them 25 centimes every day?" "Oh yes, my lord, that, at least; everything is so dear now." "I suppose we may add as much more for your clothes, mendings, books, and other little daily expenses." "You may, my lord; that makes already 50 centimes a day." "And about how many days are there in a month?" "About thirty." "How much does that make, then, at 50 centimes a day?" "That makes 15 francs a month." "And how many months are there in a year?" "There are twelve, my lord." "And twelve months, at 15 francs a month, how much does that make at the end of the year?" "My lord, that makes 180 francs." "Very well, my child, and how old are you?" "I am ten years of age, my lord." "Well! can you tell me how much you have already cost your good parents?" "I have already cost them 1,800 francs." "Yes, dear child, you have answered well; but that is not all, for you must add to that the expense of doctors and medicines, journeys, unforeseen expenses, things that you have spoiled or lost, &c.

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You must add to it all the sufferings, the griefs, the long and fatiguing toils of your father and mother, their good advice, their instructions, the good education they are giving you, &c. All that is not to be repaid by money, but by the love and gratitude of a good heart."—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 251.

II.—DUTIES OF SUPERIORS.

298. *The Sons of the High Priest, Heli.*—You sometimes complain, perhaps, my dear friends, that your fathers and mothers are a little severe towards you; you are wrong, it is their duty to bring you up well. Hear what happened to the high priest Heli, for having neglected it. He had two sons, Ophni and Phinees. They were employed in the service of the Temple, but they discharged their duty very badly, committing shameful irreverence in the house of the Lord, and great injustice with regard to the faithful who came to offer their sacrifices to God. The high priest was aware of the evil courses to which his sons gave themselves up; but he contented himself with some slight remonstrances, instead of employing the most effective means of correcting them. For that reason it was that God, being angry with him, sent the young prophet Samuel, whose interesting story you know, to warn him of the vengeance that was going to fall on all his house. "I will take from his family," said the Lord, "the sovereign priesthood, to give it to another; most of his descendants shall be

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cut off in the flower of their age; his two wicked sons shall die on the same day, and, finally, his whole posterity shall bear the perpetual marks of their crimes." Do you see, my dear children, what misfortunes were the consequence of a father's negligence in punishing, and correcting his children? But, to accomplish these sad prophecies, God caused a new war to be made against the Jews, by the Philistines who were the declared enemies of that people. The armies having met, they came to an engagement; then, that of the people of God was utterly routed and defeated, the Ark of the Covenant was taken by the victors, the two sons of Heli found dead on the field, and himself, on hearing these disastrous tidings, fell backwards from his seat, and broke his skull on the pavement, at the age of 98. The wife of Phinees, learning the death of her husband and the taking of the Ark, died suddenly, giving birth to a child, who was thus an orphan from his birth. Finally, all the other misfortunes revealed to the little Samuel were successively accomplished in the same way, and all this, I repeat, dear friends, to punish a father who was wanting in just severity towards his children.—I. Kings, Chap. IV.

299. *St. Anselm's Good Advice.*—It is not always easy, my young friends, to bring up children and to form youth. The high priest Heli was punished in a terrible manner, for having been too lax and indulgent with his children; but it is possible that he might have drawn other evil consequences on himself, if he

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had been too harsh and too rough in his punishments. We must, in this respect, follow the advice of St. Anselm. It is related of him that the superior of a house, who was in repute for piety and learning, was one day complaining to that celebrated Archbishop of Canterbury, of children who were being brought up in his monastery. "It is singular," said he, "we punish them severely every day, yet they do not become better; on the contrary, they are worse after than before."—"And when they are grown up," demanded the holy Archbishop, "how are they?"—"Ah, father, they are only beasts and idiots," simply answered the superior. "That is a fine education which changes men into beasts! But, tell me, my Lord Abbot, if, after having planted a tree in your garden, you inclosed it on every side, so that it could not extend its branches, would it not become stunted, crooked, bent and useless? So, let me tell you, in cramping these poor children as you do, without leaving them any freedom, you cause them to nourish within themselves ideas and sentiments the very opposite of what you would fain teach them, and which, acquiring strength from day to day, make them end by disregarding and defying all your punishments. These sentiments grow in them as they grow older; their soul having never been nourished in charity, they see the whole world through a distorted medium. To make a piece of jewelry out of a gold plate, does the artificer content himself with giving it great blows of his hammer? Does he not take care, on

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the contrary, to smooth, to polish, to soften, &c.? Even so must you do with your children." The superior, having heard this discourse, threw himself at St. Anselm's feet, acknowledged that he had acted unwisely, and promised to do better for the time to come.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 297.

359. *A Good Master with His Servants.*—Persons who have workmen, clerks, or even servants, my good friends, ought to love them, instruct them as far as they can, and study their interests in every way. Remember this, that good employers make good workmen, and that good masters make good servants. St. Francis de Sales, that mild and amiable bishop, was fond of relating the following story, which was probably his own: A prelate of great distinction was so ready to admit to his service all those who presented themselves that he had a great number of domestics who were of no use whatever to him, and cost him a great deal. He was told of this; his relations themselves made him understand that he was wrong to act so, and that he was incurring great expense. "I will dismiss some of my people," said he then, "but give me the exact list of all those who are useless to me." It was done accordingly. After reading it attentively he sent for all those who were inscribed in it, and said to them: "My poor friends, I am told your services are no longer necessary in my house, and I find myself under the sad necessity of discharging you. What do you think of it?" "Ah! my lord!" they all cried

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out together, "if you send us away we are lost people; what will become of us?" "Since that is the case, my friends, I swear to you I will not send you away. I kept you before because I had need of you, and now I will keep you because you have need of me. Stay, then, and whilst there is bread in my house, you shall have your share of it; when there is no more, we shall mingle our tears and die of hunger together." Was not that what you might call a good master, dear friends? Well! let us act in the same spirit as far as occasion requires, and our name will be blessed by all those who are in our service.—FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Education*, I., 487.

301. *Racine's Carp.*—We sometimes meet, dear friends, with young people who, instead of placing their happiness in their own family, go and seek pleasure and amusement in public places, or amongst strangers. I consider that very bad. That was not what Racine did, one of the greatest poets of the reign of Louis XIV. One day when he had returned from Versailles, to enjoy a little rest and peace in the midst of his family, a squire of the Prince of Condé's came to announce that his master expected him to dinner. "I thank the Prince for his invitation, but I shall not have the honor of dining with him to-day, It is eight days since I saw my wife and children; they are looking forward to the pleasure of eating a fine carp with me this evening; so, you see I cannot be excused from dining with them." "But, Mr. Racine," said the squire, "your absence will mortify His Highness,

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for he has invited a large company on purpose to meet you." Racine was still immoveable; he went so far as to have the carp of which he had spoken brought in, and he said to the Prince of Condé's messenger: "Judge for yourself, sir, whether I could excuse myself from dining with my children to-day, and sharing that beautiful, tempting carp with my family. Once more, excuse me to the Prince; I am sure he will himself approve of my refusal. The father of a family belongs entirely to his wife and children." Racine was right, my friends, and his excuse was accepted and even applauded by every one. FILASSIER, *Hist. of Education*, 1,218.

292. *The Worm in a Pail of Water.*—Do you know what a spoiled child is? I am going to tell you, my dear friends, so that you may not become so yourselves. A spoiled child is one who is allowed by his parents to do his own will in all things; then he becomes a little peevish, disagreeable, grumbling, ridiculous creature, insupportable to every one, and especially to himself. You will understand it better by the following little anecdote, which we read in *Morality in Action*, and in the *Historical Dictionary of Education:* A lady of Paris, who lived in the eighteenth century, had a son whom she was so afraid of making sick by contradicting him, that he became a little tyrant, and grew furious when they refused him the least thing. The lady had often been warned by her husband and friends of the injury she was doing her child by yielding to all his caprices; but all was in

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vain. She was in her chamber one evening, when she heard her son crying in the yard as if he were burned; he even scratched his face because a servant would not give him what he wanted. "You are very impertinent," said she to the servant, "to refuse my son what he asks for; I want you to give it to him immediately." "If he cried till to-morrow, madam, he couldn't have it." At these words the lady herself becomes furious, and runs to her husband, who was in the parlor with some of his friends, to have him instantly dismiss the impudent servant who had opposed her will. The gentleman follows her to the yard, whilst the others go to the window to see how the matter was going to end. "You saucy fellow," said the master, "how did you dare to disobey your mistress by not giving the boy what he asked for?" "Indeed, sir, the mistress cannot give it to him herself; there a little while ago, the little boy saw the moon shining in a pail of water, and he insists that I must give it to him." At these words the gentleman and the rest of the company burst out laughing; the lady herself, angry as she was, could not help laughing, too. But, at the same time, she was so ashamed of the ludicrous scene to which she had given rise, that she corrected herself, and made the little rebel an amiable and engaging child.—FILASSIER, *Dict. Hist. d'Education*, I., 768.

303. *I Do as My Father Does.*—It is a very great misfortune, my friends, when fathers and mothers, in short, all superiors, do not give good example to

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their children or inferiors. Father Guyon, a famous preacher of this century, has quoted a remarkable example of this. A pious lady had taken particular care of the education of her son, and had brought him up in the purest principles of religion. He made an excellent first communion, and afterwards his piety, his fidelity to all his duties seemed to go on increasing. Nevertheless, when he had reached the age of about seventeen, he appeared to relax very sensibly; his mother was grieved to see him gradually laying aside his pious practices; at last he even ceased to frequent the sacraments and to discharge the first duties of a Christian. Alarmed by such sad results, his mother knew not to what to attribute the cause, for it seemed to her that Alphonse (which was the young man's name) frequented no bad company, or read no bad books. One day she goes into his chamber, and there, alone with him, she sheds a great abundance of tears, and conjures him to tell her whence came this change in his conduct. "Why, mother, you are wrong to trouble yourself so about me, I am always the same, I love you as much as ever." "Ah! my son, you are making believe that you do not understand me; I do not doubt your affection for me; but was not God deserving of all your love? Why, then, have you changed in His regard?" "But, mother!"—"Come, come, my son hide nothing from me."—"Well! since you requir it, I will tell you. In my first years, formed by your pious lessons, I loved religion, I practised it with all

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my heart, and I was happy, oh! yes, I was happy!—But, since then—I have reflected. I love you still very much, my dear mother, but I see that I am old enough now not to imitate you. Now, I am going to do as my father does; he is a good man, every one says, but I see that he performs no act of religion, and I want to be like him, for fear of displeasing him."—"Ah! my son, what do you say? what a revelation!" Thereupon she goes, as fast as her trembling limbs would carry her, to her husband's apartment, alarms him by her tears and sighs, and has only strength to say these words—"*Oh husband, your son!*" then she faints away. Her husband does all he can to restore her to consciousness, succeeds at last, questions her and is made acquainted with the scene that has just passed. The worthy father is overcome; he understands and confesses his fault, goes to his son and exclaims: "Ah! my son, that lesson is too much for me, I cannot resist it—you bring me back to virtue." The same day they both went to a priest, confessed, and returned to the way of religion, from which they strayed no more.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, V., 82.

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CHAPTER VI.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

Thou Shalt not Kill.

I.—ON MURDER.

304. *The Murder of Abel.*—You all remember, I am sure, my little friends, the story of Cain and Abel, who were the two first children of Adam and Eve. They ought to have loved and cherished each other, as brothers, and so Abel did, although he was the youngest; but Cain, jealous of seeing his young brother wiser, more virtuous, more pleasing to God than himself, conceived an envy against him which degenerated into a violent hatred. And, as our passions carry us to the last excesses, when we do not repress them, this unhappy man formed the horrible project of killing his brother. One day, then, approaching him with an air of hypocrital mildness, he invited him out for a walk in the fields; but, no sooner had they reached a place where no one could see them, than he threw himself upon him and brutally struck him with a knotty stick or the branch of a tree. The innocent Abel, a model of sweetness and good-

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ness, doubtless forgave his brother this abominable crime, but God did not forgive it. Some time after, He appeared to the murderer, and asked him: "Cain, where is thy brother Abel?" "I know nothing of him," the wretch shortly replied; "am I my brother's keeper?" "What hast thou done with thy brother?" added the Lord; "thou hast killed him, thou hast shed his blood upon the ground, and that blood cries to heaven for vengeance. Cursed shalt thou be, a wanderer and a vagabond on the earth." This terrible threat was fulfilled to the letter, and for several hundreds of years that Cain lived after, he was made to suffer the frightful consequences of his crime. It is even thought that he was killed in his turn by Lamech, one of his grandsons, who took him for a wild beast, and unknowingly shot him with an arrow.—*Genesis*, Chap. IV.

305. *The Accusing Birds.*—Murder is so great a crime, dear friends, that God almost always ordains it so that the wretches who commit it are discovered and punished, even in this life. There are some curious stories told on that subject; here is a very extraordinary one. St. Meinrad was a young lord of Suabia, in Germany; in the flower of his years he left his illustrious family, to commune with God in solitude. The night often surprised him attentively reading the Sacred Scriptures, an old manuscript copy with golden clasps which had come down to him from his fathers; often, too, he meditated on the virtues, the holiness, the goodness, and the miracles of the

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Blessed Virgin. He made his vows in the Abbey of Reichenau, situate in the duchy of Baden, and he afterwards left it to take up his abode in a little hermitage, on the summit of Mount Etzel. There he spent seven years; but the good odor of his virtues reached the depth of the valleys. At first shepherds and woodcutters came to him, then lords, then noble ladies, then, at last, a multitude of people. This homage was a torment to the holy hermit, who loved only meditation, humility, and the solitude of the woods. Hence it was that he secretly quitted his hermitage, taking nothing with him but the statue of the Blessed Virgin, the only ornament of his little chapel, and took refuge in Switzerland, in a forest of the Canton of Schwitz, which bore the characteristic name of the Black or Dark Forest. He there spent peaceful and happy days, and would have reached a good old age, if he had not been murdered at the end of thirty-two years by robbers, with whom he had had the charity to share the limpid water of his spring, and the wild fruits of his forest. But God did not permit this atrocious crime to remain unknown. The murderers had been seen by no one, but they were betrayed by two crows, who harassed them continually even in Zurich. They followed them everywhere with incredible fury; they penetrated even into the city, made their way through the windows of the inn where the murderers had taken refuge, and never left them till they were arrested. The ruffians then confessed their crime, and

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suffered the extreme penalty of the law. In memory of this singular event, which took place in the year 861, the Abbey of Reichenau, of whose community St. Meinrad had been a member, placed the figure of two crows in its arms and on its seal.—BOLLANDISTS, *Act. Sanc.*, 21st January.

306. *The Kick of a Brutal Son.*—Speaking of the bad treatment which the Fifth Commandment forbids to our neighbor, do not forget, dear children, that the sin would be still greater, if that bad treatment were given to parents or superiors. I have just thought of a very interesting story on this subject. A hermit of the Grand Duchy of Baden, in Germany, if I am not mistaken, was busy one day gathering herbs in a forest. All at once he hears piteous cries; he runs in the direction of the sounds, and finds lying near a bush, a poor young man who was grievously wounded in the right foot. The hermit raises him up, drags him with much difficulty to his cabin, and dresses his wound. The young man afterwards told him his story: "I have been a short time in the service of a rich lord; yesterday, we were riding through the forest where you found me, when my master discovered that he had lost a bag of silver, which he had fastened to his steed; we stop immediately, and I retrace my steps to seek it; but not having found it, I return to my master who was waiting for me in great wrath. He was so angry that he accused me of having the bag, and hidden it in the bushes so as to secure it afterwards. In vain

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did I declare my innocence, he would not believe me; he even drew his sword and gave me a random blow, that wounded me in the right foot and made me fall to the ground. As for him, he fled with all speed, leaving me in the state in which you found me." "Your story has interested me," said the hermit, "but I pity your fate, because I see you suffer *innocently*." This last word *innocently*, instead of consoling the wounded man, appeared to distress him greatly; he sighed deeply, then burst into tears, his face betraying some strange emotion. "Alas, father, you are wrong in saying that I suffer innocently, for I deserve what has come upon me. Listen to what I am about to tell you. My good mother is still living, and I wish I could see her again, for I am her only son. But what a crime I have committed in her regard! One day we were both riding in a wagon to a neighboring village. On the way we happened to dispute about some trifling matter; I dared to rebel against her, and even carried my fury so far as to throw her out of the wagon with a kick. My poor mother threatened then to give me up to justice, and I, in order to avoid the fate that awaited me, took flight, and crossed the frontier into a foreign country. Then it was that I entered the service of the nobleman before mentioned, and met with my accident. See now, father, how God punishes me: the foot that is wounded is the very one with which I dared to kick my poor mother!" His story ended, the young man asked the hermit to hear his confession; the

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man of God healed his body and his soul at once, and, some days after, the penitent son went to throw himself into the arms of his mother, who forgave him with all her heart.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 267.

307. *The Skull of a Murdered Man.*—It is very rare, my dear friends, that God leaves concealed the authors of a murder, which is one of the greatest crimes that can be committed in society. There are stories of this kind related that are almost incredible. Here is one that I did not read in books; it was told me by a person who had it from an eye-witness. It was about the year 1825. They were preparing to inter a dead body in the cemetery of Mont Parnasse at Paris. The grave-digger had made the grave, and, as is usual with men who dig the earth, he rested himself standing, leaning on the handle of his spade. All at once, thinking of nothing in particular, he sees, amongst the bones he had taken from the grave, a human skull that seemed to roll about. He paid no great attention to it at first, but at last he perceived that the skull was moving, by little jumps, as it were, over the earth just turned up. That surprises him; he approaches, takes up the skull, and begins to examine it more closely. What was his surprise, to see issue from it an enormous toad, which was lodged in it, and in seeking to escape made the skull move! The grave-digger, laughing, was going to throw down the fleshless head, when he perceived beside the left temple a little rust. He examines again, and sees

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very distinctly the end of a knife-blade that had broken in the skull. Very much astonished, he begins to reflect, and endeavors to remember who was the individual that was buried there some years before. As he had been a long time attached to the cemetery of Mont Parnasse, he remembered that, nearly fifteen years before, there was buried there a man found dead in his bed, and whose murderer had never been discovered. He immediately takes the head, runs with it to the crown lawyer, relates how he came to find it, and what he had heard of the man's mysterious death. The police take the rusty piece of blade from out the skull, go to the house formerly inhabited by the dead man, make a general search, and at length find the old broken knife, to which this piece just fitted; the children of the deceased were interrogated, and, after much investigation, it was discovered that the eldest son of the unfortunate victim had been the perpetrator of the crime. He confessed it himself, and received the punishment he deserved.—G. S. G.

308. *Assassins in the Cathedral of Imola.*—*Apropos* to murder, dear children, I will tell you of one that was accompanied by circumstances extremely glorious for Pope Pius IX., at the time he was cardinal archbishop of Imola. It was the season of the carnival; according to the pious custom of the Church, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed in the Cathedral. The venerable pontiff was praying before the Sacred Host, deposited in a subterraneous chapel. All at

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once, piteous cries were heard in the church above; he goes up in all haste, and perceives an unfortunate man who had been stabbed with a poignard, and had fallen exhausted at the foot of a pillar. The cardinal approaches him, interrogates him, raises him gently, and sets about examining his wound. At this moment some furious men rush into the church yelling and shouting! it is the murderers seeking their victim to finish him. The holy Pontiff understands their horrible design; he gently places the wounded man on the ground, advances to meet the assassins and addresses them in these energetic words: "How, wretches! you have the audacity to pursue your victim even to the foot of the altar of the living God! Is it not enough to have murdered him? Would you even drink his blood?" At sight of their charitable archbishop, the assassins were frightened and fled precipitately. For him, he returns to his patient, takes him on his knee and sends for a physician, who dresses his wound, announcing, however, that he has not many moments to live. The cardinal hears his confession, gives him absolution, and soon after receives his last sigh. It was also by his directions, and at his expense, that the last rites were next day rendered to him. Admirable instance of Christian charity, thousands of which are found in the history of the Church—and her pontiffs. *Daily Rewards*, *No.* 101, *p.* 4.

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II.—DUELLING AND SUICIDE.

399.—*The Suicide's Mass.*—One must really hate themselves, must they not, children, to put themselves to death? If it were only taking away the life of the body, I could understand that; but it is at the same time casting themselves wilfully into the gulf of hell. Amongst the history of suicides, there are few that would interest you so much as the following. It is Pope Pius II. who relates it in his works: A nobleman of Istria, one of the provinces of Austria, was violently tempted to kill himself; the demon of despair had long urged him to this fatal design; he had even seen himself on the very point of executing it. It came into his head, however, to speak of it to a friend of his, a learned religious. You may imagine that that pious servant of God consoled him as well as he could; he advised him to have a priest in his castle, and have Mass said every day. "With that," added he, "I answer for your salvation." The gentleman did so exactly, and completely lost sight of his sinister project. But, at the end of a year, his almoner having been invited to celebrate Mass in a neighboring parish, could not, consequently, say Mass in the castle chapel. The lord had willingly permitted him, proposing to assist at the Mass himself; unhappily, some business having detained him at the castle, he perceived, towards noon, that he had not heard Mass, because his former temptations of suicide came back to his mind.

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Hastily mounting his horse, he rides off at full speed to try and be in time for the village Mass. But a peasant, whom he met and questioned, said to him: "Your lordship need be in no hurry, for Mass is over." At these words the unhappy nobleman is afflicted, and falls into despair. "*I am lost*," he cries, "*it is over! oh! what a misfortune!*" The peasant, astonished, asked him for an explanation, and, having heard it, he said: "Oh! if it's only that, I can give you the benefit of the Mass I have heard; only give me your cloak." This criminal bargain was made, and the nobleman continued his way. But see, dear children, what it is to jest with sacred things: on his return in the evening, our nobleman found the peasant hanging from a tree on the roadside. God had permitted that, in punishment of his cupidity, he was tempted, and overcome.—SCHMID et BELET, II., 558.

310.—*Association Against Duelling*—One of the most barbarous customs that it is possible to see, is, unquestionably, that of duelling. It was a custom unhappily too common in France in the reign of Louis XIV. Cardinal Richelieu had endeavored to repress that barbarous custom. M. Olier, pastor of St. Sulpice in Paris, and founder of the celebrated seminary of that name, undertook to destroy it, by opposing true honor to the false honor so often invoked by duellists. He formed the project of an association of gentlemen, who bound themselves by oath never to send or accept a challenge, under any circum-

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stances whatsoever. At the head of this association he placed the Marquis de Fenelon, a man most favorably known in Paris and in the army. They even affected to admit, especially at the outset, only military men the most distinguished by their deeds of valor and of the highest renown. It was on the very day of Pentecost, in the year 1651, that all the associates solemnly brought to the venerable pastor of St. Sulpice the document signed by them, and conceived in these terms: "The undersigned do, by this present writing, make public and solemn declaration that they will refuse all sorts of challenges, never fight a duel for any cause whatsoever, and in every way manifest the detestation they have for duelling, &c." This celebrated act made a profound impression on the mind of the young King Louis XIV., and, throughout his entire reign, he was inflexible on this point, and granted no dispensation of that kind.—GUILLOIS, *Explic. du Cat.*, II., 284.

311. *Inscription on a Public Monument.*—Nothing renders life sweeter, more agreeable than the practice of virtue; on the contrary, weariness, disgust and despair are always the bitter fruits of vice. Do you want a proof of this, my young friends? the Abbe Reyre furnishes you with one in his *Christian Anecdotes.* In a city of the south of France, which I think was Nimes, there lived in the last century a rich man, who had denied himself none of what is called the sweets of life; and do you know what all that had led him to? Simply to being disgusted with life.

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He was strongly tempted to kill himself, when, happening to cross the public square of the city, he perceived the inscription placed in golden letters on the front of an hospital, or some other house of charity. This inscription was as follows:

O THOU FOR WHOM EXISTENCE IS A BURDEN!
SEEK TO DO GOOD!
VIRTUE WILL MAKE THEE LOVE LIFE.

He stops a moment, and remembers that there is in his neighborhood a poor joiner, whose wife died a little before, leaving several small children. "I am mad," he exclaims, "to wish to die and leave my fortune to heirs who would only laugh at me! I will make a worthier use of it." He instantly hastens to the joiner's, adopts all his children, places them at a school, gives them trades, and afterwards establishes them in business, and finally has the consolation of seeing them all become excellent Christians and respectable citizens. He then confessed that he had never experienced more happiness than in occupying himself with that poor family. He lived long and lived happy.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, V., 229.

312. *The Two Soldiers who Fight a Duel.*—Duelling, which is sometimes glorified by people without religion, is the most absurd and brutal custom with which I am acquainted, my friends, for it always does harm, and never good. In 1805 there happened at Boulogne-sur-Mer a most edifying fact, the hero of which was the Abbé Haffreingue, one of the most respectable priests of that city; the affair was first

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published in a Protestant paper. The Abbé was ascending Mont de Postel, a short distance from Boulogne, when he saw two soldiers who appeared to be going the same way as he. He waited for them to have a chat, but they took an opposite direction. The good priest, who suspected something, followed at a distance, and overtook the two soldiers, who, having taken off their overcoats, attacked each other furiously with their swords. Father Haffreingue darts towards them, crying out: "What a shame to see two brave men exposing their lives in such a way!" "A Frenchman ought to know how to die," said one of them coolly. "That is true, but he ought to die only for his country." And, so saying, the priest takes hold of one of the sabres, and declares that he will not give it up unless they both promise, on their honor, not to continue to fight. Struck by such courage and such goodness, the two soldiers stopped, threw themselves into each other's arms, and caused their reconciler to shed tears of joy and satisfaction.—Guillois, *Explic. du Cat.*, II., 285.

313. *The Two Weeping Willows.*—The mild word appeases anger, the harsh word excites wrath, as the Scripture itself tells us. Very often a good word, seasonably spoken, sometimes even a happy jest, reconciles two enemies, and prevents the worst consequences. A well-known writer extricated himself from a serious embarrassment in the following way: M. Charles Hugo, a novelist of some repute, had been several times made the subject of puns, con-

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undrums, &c., in the works of Alexandre Dumas, junior. Tired of seeing himself thus held up to ridicule, he thought to put an end to this species of annoyance by challenging the other to fight a duel. After having read it, M. Dumas took a piece of paper, and drew upon it two champions who clove each other in twain and fell both on the ground. Underneath was read the following lines:

> Voici le resultat de ce combat fatal!
> Ils se sont pardonné, mais ils se sont fait mal.*

M. Dumas then folds the paper in the form of a circular, and sends it to his too susceptible friend. M. Hugo did not laugh, however; on the contrary, he grew still more red with anger, and sent a second challenge more offensive than the first. Thereupon the witty Dumas took his pen and sketched what follows: A landscape, in the midst of which were seen two weeping willows, shading two tombs, surrounded by an iron railing, and watered by a gardener. On the first tomb was read: HERE LIES HUGO! and on the second: HERE LIES DUMAS! a little lower were the words: DEATH HAS RE-UNITED THEM. At this second epistle, M. Hugo could not help laughing; he hastens to his friend's residence, shakes him warmly by the hand, and promises not to be vexed any more.—HEBRARD, *Journal des bons Exemples*, III., 442.

* Behold the result of this fatal encounter:
They forgave one another; but hurted each other sorely.

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314. *A Good Advice Would Have Saved Me!*—Ah! my young friends, if you only knew how much good word of consolation, a word of encouragement, a good advice, may do, you would hasten to lavish them on those whom you see overwhelmed with misery or grief. It is not I who say it, it is a poor victim whose story I am about to tell you. Last year the Paris journals mentioned that a dead body had been discovered by the police in the Seine; it was that of a young man; he appeared to have been scarcely a night in the water. The body was placed in the Morgue, a species of hall built expressly for the reception of unknown persons found dead in the city, in order that their families may come to claim them. But before exposing the body of this unhappy young man, his pockets had been searched to see if any letters or papers could be found that would make known his name. In his pocket-book was found a little note written on purpose, and conceived in the following terms: "I am called Eugene S——; I belong to a respectable family of Poitiers; I am eighteen; I came to Paris to study law, but had the misfortune to take up with bad companions, and they have ruined me; for that reason it is that I have determined to drown myself, although I know it will plunge my family in grief. *A good advice would have saved me!*" Mark well these last words, dear friends, and profit by them.—G. S. G.

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III.—ON REVENGE.

315. *Vengeance Belongs to God Alone.*—We are never allowed to revenge ourselves, unless it be after the manner of Our Lord, that is to say, returning good for evil. This is just what was a little forgotten by a solitary of the Thebaïd, who lived in the fourth century. He had received some injury, or some cutting words from one of his brethren, and the devil persuaded him not to forgive the offence, but to take his revenge in a signal manner. Before coming to this extremity, the offended solitary had the happy inspiration of going to a holy abbot, named Sisoës, who was the glory of the desert for his prudence and virtue. St. Sisoës consoled the poor solitary as well as he could, urging him to forgive his brother generously, and leave it to God to avenge the wrong done him. All he could say was useless; the other would absolutely taste of the bitter fruits of revenge. "Well! brother, since you are determined, let us, at least, pray a little together." They knelt down; St. Sisoës collected his thoughts a moment, then said, sighing: "My God, give Thyself no more trouble in protecting, or assisting us, or busying Thyself with our affairs; it seems we can do very well without Thee, for this brother here maintains that we can revenge ourselves." At these words, so little expected, the solitary rises, asks pardon of the Saint, goes to find his enemy and forgives him with all his heart.—Rufin, *Vie des Pères*, Liv. III.

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316. *Were They to Spit in Our Face.*—It is worthy of remark, dear children, that it is only in religion people know how to bear an injury. Our Lord was the first to give us an example of this during His life, and especially in His passion, and, since His time, all the Saints have done the same thing. I will remember all my life the following fact which I read in the life of St. Francis Xavier, the intrepid apostle of the Indies and Japan. One of his companions, Father Fernandez, was preaching one day in the middle of the public square of Amanguchi, in Japan, when a rude idolator, a man belonging to the very dregs of the people, approached him as if to whisper in his ear, and spat full in his face. What would we have done, dear friends, had we been in his place? What a state of anger and vexation we should have been in! As for the pious missionary, he quietly took out his handkerchief, wiped his face, and continued his discourse, without showing the least emotion. What was the result? It was this, that all those who had been witnesses of this scene, and had been, at first, perhaps, inclined to laugh, were filled with admiration for such an act of patience. Better even than that: one of the most learned men of the city, who was present, cried out that a religion which inspires so much virtue must be the only true one. As soon as the sermon was finished, he went to Father Fernandez, begged to be instructed, received baptism with great solemnity, and this remarkable conversion was followed by many others. All that, my

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dear children, was the happy consequence of an insult borne with patience.—BOUHOUR'S *Life of St. Francis Xavier.*

317. *Saint Francis Regis Slapped in the Face.*—You remember well, my dear friends, these words of Our Lord: "To him that striketh thee on the one cheek offer also the other." Well! although it appears hard to follow this counsel, there are several Saints who practised it to the letter. I remember, amongst others, St. Francis Regis, the Apostle of the Cevennes and the Vivarais, that is to say, the Department of Ardeche and the adjoining district. One Sunday, he learns that some libertines had assembled in a country inn of bad repute; that they had drank to excess, and, in their orgies, were uttering horrible blasphemies and giving themselves up to all sorts of wickedness. Without pausing to consider the danger to which he exposes himself, the holy priest goes to the place, makes his appearance amongst these wretches, and endeavors, by words of charity and reason, to restrain the course of their scandalous conduct. His exhortations were not heeded, and one of these libertines even rose from the table, and going up to him, gave him a blow in the face. Without manifesting the least emotion, St. Francis Regis turns the other cheek to him and mildly says: "I thank you very much, my dear friend, for the opinion you have of me: but, if you knew me better you would see that I deserve still more." These words, this tone of mildness, this so

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truly Christian moderation, filled the profligates with salutary confusion; they asked pardon of the Saint and immediately withdrew.—Daubenton, *Life of St. Francis Regis.*

318. *Why I Rang the Bell.*—It is a curious, I might almost say an amusing thing, to see how ingenious Saints are in doing good, or avoiding evil. I will tell you how one of them revenged himself, the blessed Peter Fourrier, who was pastor of Mattaincourt, in the Vosges, at the beginning of the seventeenth century. There was in his parish a wicked man who had seduced a young female and led her into sin. A good confession made to the Saint opened the eyes of this poor sinner, and she was sincerely converted. Enraged at this change, which he had not the courage to imitate, her seducer discharged all his fury on the pious pastor. He waited for him one day at the church door, began to abuse him and dared to strike him with his fist. That did not last long, however, for the children, coming out from Catechism, I think it was, and venerating their pastor, attacked the insolent ruffian and quickly drove him away. Many persons ran after him, and he would have been hardly dealt with were it not for the ingenious device of the Blessed Peter. He goes to the church in all haste and begins to ring the bell, as if a fire had broken out somewhere. Hearing the alarm-bell, all the people run towards the church asking what is the matter. The good pastor ascended the pulpit, relates his stratagem and winds up by

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saying: "My dear brethren, let us pray for this poor lost soul, it has much need of our prayers." In this way he kept them in church for half an hour, and his enemy had time to escape. God did not fail to reward his servant for this act of charity so ingenious; on the following morning, the criminal came to throw himself at the feet of the pastor of Mattaincourt, made a general confession, repaired the scandal he had given, and led ever after an exemplary life.—CHAPIA, *Life of Blessed Peter Fourrier.*

319. *How Sisters of Charity Take Revenge.*—The year 1832 was sadly signalized in Paris by scenes of disorder, which were the effect of the unhappy revolution of 1830; but it was still more marked by the horrors of the cholera, which then made its first appearance in France. One day Sister St. Mary was going into the charity hospital, when she was rudely insulted by a working-man, who followed and abused her, and would even have struck her if some one had not prevented him. The good Sister knew only how to pardon and pray. Some days passed. In the beginning of the month of April, hundreds of cholera patients were crowded into the wards of the hospital, mingled with the dead bodies of those who daily expired. One morning, a new patient was brought in, whose condition appeared desperate. "*No more room*" was the abrupt answer of the person charged with the reception of patients; "*doctors and nurses can attend no more.*" But Sister St. Mary was there; she recognized the patient, and exclaimed: "I will take

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charge of him,—I will find him a corner somewhere. Do not refuse him; I will tend him myself." She immediately enters on her task, and, without neglecting the other patients, she attends to this one with the most assiduous care. At the end of eight days the man was in a state of convalescence; but one morning, he missed from his bedside the good Sister St. Mary, his benefactress. "Alas!" he was told, "she took the cholera herself, and died during the night." In fact, my very dear friends, the good Sister died attending the wretch who had insulted her some days before: she had recognized him, and revenged herself on him after the manner of the Saints. She died on the 8th of April, 1832.—GUILLOIS, *Nouvelle Explic. du Cat.*, 167.

IV.—ON SCANDAL.

329. *The Soldiers of Julian the Apostate.*—A true Christian may sometimes be mistaken, my dear friends, he may even scandalize others without meaning it; but, as soon as he perceives the scandal he has given, he makes it a duty to repair it, disavowing and condemning his error. Thus it was that several Christian soldiers comported themselves, who had been insidiously led by Julian the Apostate into his apostacy. It was customary, on certain occasions, for the emperors, seated on their throne in pompous array, to give money to the troops with their own hands. In one of those ceremonies, which took place, I think in

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361, Julian had an altar placed beside him, with a brasier and incense, and each soldier was required to throw a little incense on the fire, before receiving his present. They were given to understand that it was only the renewal of an ancient custom, of no importance whatever. Most of them did not perceive the stratagem prepared for them; but, on being reproached with what they had done, they gave the liveliest proofs of repentance, ran through the streets and squares crying aloud: "We are still Christians; be it known unto all. O Jesus Christ! Our adorable Saviour, we have not renounced Thee! If our hand was surprised, our heart had no share in it!" They were courageous enough to go and cast the money they had received at the feet of the emperor, telling him aloud: "Reserve your gifts for those who accept them on such shameful conditions; to us, they are far more odious than death. Cut off our hands, which have been defiled, cut short the thread of our life, immolate us to Jesus Christ, our Divine Master, whom you have made us betray against our will." What a lesson, dear friends, or rather what a reproach for the apostates of our times, who, very far from repairing the scandal they have given, renew it every day by persevering in their apostacy!—Reyre, *Anec. Chret.*, 26.

321. *St. Arsenus and His Pillow and Mattrass.*—Our nature is so bad, in consequence of original sin, that we are easily scandalized by the least thing. That would not happen, my dear friends, if we had a

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little more charity and virtue; often even, if we knew the motives on which others act, we should see that they have very good ones. It is in order to prove this to you that I am going to tell you the following story. St. Arsenus, before becoming a religious, had occupied a considerable position in the world, having been the preceptor of Arcadius, son of the Emperor Theodosius the Great. He had, therefore, tasted the sweets of life which are met in courts. Some time after he had embraced the religious life, he fell sick; then his superior obliged him to take care of himself; he caused a mattrass and a pillow to be given to him, so that he might sleep easier. A solitary came to see St. Arsenus whilst he was in that state, and was scandalized at these little indulgences which he allowed himself. The superior perceived it, and drawing him aside, said to him: "Tell me, Brother, what were you before you entered into religion?"—"Father, I was a shepherd, for my parents were very poor."—"Then, you did not live at your ease?"—"Oh! no, father, I often had not even bread to eat."—"So, you are better off, and live more comfortably since you have been a monk than when you were in the world?"—"Certainly, Father!" "How! my dear Brother, and you find fault with the compassion we have had for Arsenus, who lived at court and had all the delicacies of the world at his command? You must acknowledge that it was wrong of you to be scandalized at the little exemptions which his superior has imposed upon him."

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The solitary understood his fault, and was not so rash in his judgments ever after.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, V., 528.

322. *Duke Winceslaus Walking in the Snow.*—If bad example is a crime which has the most frightful consequences, good example, on the contrary, my dear friends, renders virtue sweeter and easier. Not only does it show the way, but it marks it out, and walks before it. That reminds me of a charming story, taken from the life of St. Winceslaus, king or duke of Bohemia, who lived in the tenth century. That pious monarch, who consecrated all the day to the affairs of his kingdom, went often by night to some church in Prague, his capital, to adore the Most Holy Sacrament and satisfy his piety without failing in the duties of his state. One winter's night, he took with him a gentleman of the court, and, notwithstanding the piercing cold, he walked barefoot over the snowy ground. The gentleman, on the contrary, had taken care to wrap himself up in a furred pelisse, such as are worn in cold countries; notwithstanding all that, he could not help feeling the intense cold. The king, perceiving it, was touched with compassion, and said to him: "I perceive you are susceptible to the cold,—well! walk after me, and put your feet in the marks mine have left in the snow, and you will not be cold." He did so, and felt the cold no more. There is just what happens, when people give good example, dear friends: they render the practice of virtue

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sweeter and easier.—Debussi, *Nouveau Mois de Marie*, 172.

323. *Woe to Him that Seduced Me!*—If it be an enormous crime to deprive one's neighbor of the life of the body, it is a much more enormous one to deprive him of that of the soul by pernicious counsels and by bad example. In the thirteenth century there lived a learned monk of the Order of St. Dominick named Thomas de Catimpré, who afterwards became suffragan bishop of Cambrai. When he was as yet but a simple student in the University of Paris, he connected himself closely with a young man of quality, who was a model for all young people of his age, but unhappily did not know how to guard against the seductions of bad example. He contracted a friendship with another fellow-student, who gradually succeeded in making him as corrupt as he was himself. His virtuous friends, and, of course, Thomas was of the number, frightened at the change that was wrought in him, tried to bring him back; but neither their tears nor their prayers could make the least improvement. God spoke in his turn. One night, when this poor young man was sound asleep, he all at once woke up with a start, and appeared in mortal terror. He uttered frightful cries, which soon brought every one in the house around his bed. They speak to him, question him, ask what is the matter with him; he answers not a word, but continues the same heart-rending cries. A priest is brought, who tries, in his turn, to calm

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him, and exhorts him to put his trust in God. At last the dying man turns his terrified gaze on the priest, and gives utterance to these awful words: *Woe to him that seduced me! In vain would I pray to God to forgive me my sins! I see hell opening under my feet!* Two or three minutes after he turns to the wall and expires in that terrible despair. Sad consequence of the bad example he had received, and the bad company he had kept.—Debussi, *Nouv. Mois de Marie*, 51.

324. *A Scandalous Sinner's Crown of Thorns.*—Scandal is so great a sin,—on account of the disastrous consequences it may have for many years, and even for many ages,—that it cannot be too carefully repaired, dear friends, when one has had the misfortune of giving it. It is related in the *Lettres édifiantes* that a young Frenchman of eighteen years, settled at Veria, the ancient capital of Berea, in Turkey in Asia, had the misfortune to renounce his religion, and become a Mahometan. But his conscience left him no rest when once he understood the enormity of his crime. He goes to find a Greek priest, confesses his shameful apostacy, and publicly receives Communion. All that did not seem to him sufficient to repair the scandal he had given; his fervor and repentance made him do something more. He applied to his body sharp thorns, which entered into the flesh; having taken thorns like those wherewith Our Lord was crowned, he plaited them into a crown, and placed it on his head. In this state he went through

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the streets of Veria, striking himself with a knotted cord, and crying out: "*I have been a vile apostate, but I have become a Christian again!*" Nor was that all. The governor of the city had him arrested, and exhorted him to desist from this folly and persevere in the religion of Mahomet, which he had embraced some days before. Threats, promises, torments, nothing could shake him. He was at last beheaded, and crowned by a glorious martyrdom the penance he had undertaken with so much courage and energy. —Reyre, *Anec. Chret.*, 185.

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CHAPTER VII.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

Thou Shalt not Commit Adultery, &c.

325. *Jezabel's Paint.*—Amongst the sins forbidden by the sixth commandment of God, we must not forget that which is committed by those persons who dishonor in themselves the image of God, whether by disguising themselves in an unbecoming manner, masking the face, or employing the thousand means invented by vanity solely to please the world. We find in the Old Testament an interesting story on this subject. Jezabel, wife of Achab, king of Israël, had made herself notorious by her impiety, and especially by the cruelty wherewith she had treated the prophets of the Lord, not to speak of the blood of Naboth, unjustly shed, and many other crimes. God raised up Jehu, and charged him to execute his vengeance on that sacrilegious race. Jehu commenced by killing Joram, son and successor of Achab, then he came to Jezzaël, where the wicked Jezabel still lived. As soon as that wicked woman learned the arrival of the conqueror, she flattered herself that she could gain him over by her arts and allurements. It was then she

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thought of painting herself. According to the fashion of the age and country, she painted her eyebrows and round her eyes with black, then she put red and white on her face, and finally adorned her head with a brilliant diadem and all the other ornaments her vanity could suggest. Thus adorned, she placed herself at a window just as Jehu's cortege was passing along the street. The general, looking up, at once perceived her, but instead of being attracted by her, he said aloud: "*Who is that woman? Let her be cast down!*" His orders were immediately executed; two or three officers who were in the room with Jezabel threw her out of the window. Her blood bespattered the walls and the pavements, and the dogs devoured her dead body. Terrible, but just death, which the prophets had foretold, in punishment of the barbarous treatment she had given the innocent Naboth, whom she deprived of his vineyard! —IV. *Kings*, Chap. IX.

326. *St. Jerome Studying Hebrew.*—I think I have already told you several times, my young friends, that *idleness is the mother of all vice;* that sentence was pronounced by the Holy Ghost himself; it is, therefore, true. It is said, on the contrary, that *work is the remedy for all vice;* but that is especially true of the shameful vice, as I could prove to you by a thousand examples. I will content myself with quoting one for you, that of a great Saint, one of the glories of the Church in the fourth century. Saint Jerome had had the misfortune, in his early youth,

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of forming bad connections, and even of contracting bad habits. But no sooner was he baptized, that is to say, at the age of adolescence, according to the custom of that age, than he set about correcting himself. Do you know what was the means that succeeded best with him? It was to work much. He began to study, to read, to copy books, all the while practising the exercises and the virtues of a solitary of the desert. The sin that he found it hardest to avoid was precisely that of which I have spoken to you in relation to the sixth commandment. Nevertheless, he was not discouraged; he seemed to say to the demon of impurity that tempted him every day: "Ha! thou wilt not leave me alone! what though I fast, give myself the discipline, ruin my health with all manner of austerities, thou dost still pursue me? Well! I know how to subdue thee!" He succeeded at last, my dear children, and do you know how? Still by work. To the studies he had already undertaken he added a new, and not very easy one. He began to learn Hebrew. It was an old Jew that taught him, and after awhile he became himself so well versed in the language that he translated almost the whole Bible into Latin, which was rendering a great service to the Church. Let us do like him, my young friends; when we are tempted, let us work hard; if the temptation continues, let us work still harder; if it be obstinate, let us be obstinate in working, and all will turn to good account for us.—D. Genevaux, *Hist. choisies.*

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327. *The Monk Assisting the Baker.*—It is sometimes very difficult, my dear children, not to find one's self in the midst of scandals and bad examples; but, in such case, one must behave with all possible circumspection so as not to have any share therein. This is what a young solitary was once told by St. Ephrem, one of the most celebrated Fathers of the Church in the fourth century. This good monk came to him and said: "Father, I am much embarrassed: my superior ordered me to go every morning to the oven, to assist the baker in his work; but as the oven is common to every one, and a great many people come there to bake their bread, it often happens that I meet with idle, gossipping young people, who sometimes indulge in very improper and unseasonable conversation. What am I then to do, so as not to offend our good God?"—"My dear brother," answered the old man kindly, "you must do as scholars do when they study their lessons in class. Each one busies himself with his own, and pays no attention to that of his neighbor's; although a certain noise is made when every one studies together, yet each pupil only attends to his own lesson, and does not listen to what the others have to study.—Do you the same when there are people around you holding idle or improper conversation." The young solitary felt the wisdom of this advice; he followed it, and had no further trouble. Act in like manner, my young friends, and you will have nothing to reproach yourselves with when you are unavoidably placed in similar cir-

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cumstances.—RODRIGUEZ, *Pract. of Chris. Per.*, III., 154.

328. *St. Bernard in a Frozen Pond.*—A look, a glance is soon cast, but if one dwells ever so little on a dangerous object, purposely and willingly, there is a sin; it was only a look that led Dina, daughter of Jacob, the holy king David, the wise Solomon and many others, into the greatest crimes. St. Bernard, even when he was still young, watched over himself with most particular attention to avoid occasions dangerous to his virtue. One day, however, having seen a person passing who was dressed elegantly and tastefully, he stopped to look at her a little too long. Although he was almost sure that he scarcely did it intentionally, he could never forgive himself for this inadvertency. Full of a holy anger against himself, he runs and throws himself up to his neck in a pond, the water of which is icy cold, and remains there till he is half dead. Truly, my friends, this was a most heroic sacrifice; but as such God rewarded it in an extraordinary manner, for He vouchsafed it so that from that day forth St. Bernard never had the least thought, the least temptation against the holy virtue. A good sacrifice generously offered to God never fails to bring us a multitude of graces which otherwise we should not have had.—RATISBON, *Life of St. Bernard.*

329. *Let Us Speak no More of That.*—It is most extraordinary, my dear friends, how a virtuous young man imposes respect on those who are not so;

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his presence alone often suffices to paralyze all the evil that others might have intended to do. St. Bernardine of Sienna, a religious of the Order of St. Francis in the fifth century, was many times in that position, whilst he was studying in the college of his native city. His aunt, who was charged with his education, had inspired him with a great horror of evil, together with a solid piety towards the Blessed Virgin. His pleasure was to visit the churches, to dress the altars, to serve Mass and to hear strange preachers. But all that did not interfere with his studies; on the contrary, he obtained such remarkable success therein, that he was the consolation of his parents and professors. He had so gained the esteem of his fellow-students by his virtue, that the very worst of them were ashamed in his presence. Several of them declared that whenever they happened to say anything improper or unbecoming amongst themselves, they never dared to continue the discourse on the approach of *the little saint*, as they called him. "Hush!" said they, one to another, "let us speak no more of that! here comes Bernardine." How beautiful, my dear children, and how desirable it would be could the same be said of each of you!—D. GENEVAUX, *Hist. choisies.*

330. *A Bleeding Crucifix.*—Nothing is more awful, children, than the hardness produced by evil passions in a heart that gives way to them. The noblest sentiments, the most generous feelings give

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place to brutality, stupidity, a sort of imbecility impossible to comprehend. It is related in the history of the canonization of St. Francis Borgia that a Spanish gentleman, having had the misfortune to give way to evil passions, was stricken in the flower of his age with a mortal malady. His parents and friends did all they could to persuade him to prepare for the terrible passage, but the very name of confession made him furious. St. Francis Borgia, who was in the neighborhood, having heard of this, wished to go and see him, to try whether he could prevail upon him to think of his soul's salvation. Before setting out, he went and threw himself at the foot of his crucifix and sought God to grant him the salvation of that poor soul. "*Go*," said an interior voice to him, "*go to the sick man and exhort him to penance; I promise you My grace will not be wanting to him.*" The saint hastens to the place; he is politely received on account of his high rank; but no sooner had he uttered the word confession than the dying man mustered all his remaining strength to tell him that he would never consent to it. Francis retires, throws himself again at the foot of his crucifix, and beseeches Jesus to soften that hardened heart. Then the same voice makes itself heard: "*Go back to him and take with thee this crucifix; can he resist the sight of a God dead on the cross for his redemption?*" The saint returns immediately, but the unhappy man remains insensible; he then shows him the crucified image, which, by an unheard-of prodigy of divine mercy,

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miraculously appears torn with wounds and covered with blood. O still more astounding prodigy! the hardened sinner resists all! He casts a fierce look on the sacred image of Our Lord, turns to the wall, and in despair breathes forth his guilt-stained soul. Behold, my dear children, what comes of abandoning ourselves to our passions, and especially to that of which I have just been speaking.—DEBUSSI, *New Month of Mary*, 62.

331. *A Prince at the Theatre.*—Of all the princes who have made French history glorious, there were few, my young friends, so virtuous, so pious, as the Duke of Burgundy, dauphin of France, who had the happiness of being brought up by the illustrious Fenelon. I am particularly glad to tell you what he thought of the theatre and dramatical representations. Of his own choice he would have liked them, but he knew the danger of them too well to yield to his inclination. He was one day reproached for not accompanying Louis XIV. and the other princes of the court on those occasions. "What would I go there to do?" he asked with much animation; "the state of the provinces and cities that he may one day have to govern is the sight for the dauphin of France to see." On one occasion, however, he could not avoid accompanying Louis XIV.; the performance took place in the Castle of Versailles. At the conclusion the king said to him: "What is the matter? it seems to me that you have taken no pleasure in this play?"—"Pardon me, Sire, I had the pleasure of

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being near your Majesty." This was at once paying a delicate compliment, and evading the answer to an embarrassing question. But the king was not deceived; he saw that the pious dauphin regarded the play only with disgust, and he told him that for the future he could do as he pleased in that regard. From that day forward the Duke of Burgundy never set foot in a theatre. Fine example for so many young people who are troubled with no such scruples. —REYRE, *Anec. Chret.*, 292.

332. *The Books that Mary Leczinska Read.*—France has almost always had the happiness of having for queens or empresses, princesses eminent for their piety, their generosity, and other qualities of the heart. This is a fact easily verified by those amongst you who have studied our history with care. But, amongst those queens, a choice place must be given to Mary Leczinska, daughter of King Stanislaus of Poland, and wife of Louis XV. She had a horror of all that might impair the purity of the heart, and especially bad books; if she only heard a word said against them, it was sufficient to prevent her from ever opening them. One day, two or three ladies of the palace were speaking before her of a bad production which had just appeared in Paris. "Have you read it, then, ladies?" she asked. "Yes, madam, we wished to judge for ourselves whether what they said of it was true." "As for me," said the pious princess, "I would consider it a crime to read a book that might contain anything insulting to my father, still less

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what would be insulting to my God." Another time, some one was reading, in a small company, a pamphlet that was also worthy of reprobation; the Queen's arrival was announced. "Quick, quick, hide that book," some one exclaimed; "it is one of those that her Majesty does not like." "It is true, gentlemen," said Mary Leczinska, looking at the title, "and it seems to me that all Christians ought to regard it with horror, as I do."—REYRE, *Anec. Chret.*, 350.

333. *A Prisoner Reading the Imitation.*—Just as much harm as is done by the reading of a bad book, so the reading of a good one may do of good. There is one especially, my young friends, which has made as many saints as it contains letters: it is the *Imitation of Christ.* Hear what happened in this respect to La Harpe, one of the most distinguished scholars of the last century, but at the same time one of the most impious philosophers. At the period of the Revolution he was arrested and thrown into prison. Alone there in a small room he began to reflect seriously, which had not happened to him, probably, for a long time. He also read some good books, amongst others the Psalms of David, the New Testament, and some others, but that did not completely change him. One day, weary of that state of uncertainty in which he was, he took up unthinkingly a book that lay on his mantel-piece: it was the *Imitation.* He opens it at random, and his eyes fall just on these words: "My son, behold here I am! I come to thee, because thou hast called me." He

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had no need of reading farther; he was so impressed, so struck by these words, that he fell on his knees, his face to the ground, the tears streaming from his eyes. His breast heaved with sighs, he groaned and cried aloud, and broken, incoherent words escaped him; and, in the midst of that sweet revulsion of feeling going on within him, his mind recurred incessantly to the words, *My son, behold, here I am.* La Harpe was converted; and, as God did not permit that he should perish on the scaffold, he devoted the rest of his life to making good books to counteract, as far as possible, the effect of the bad ones he had had the misfortune to write before. The beautiful words that made an impious philosopher a fervent Christian are found, my dear friends, in the third book, twenty-first chapter; read them over sometimes, recalling to mind what I have just told you.—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 254.

334. *A Reader of Romances.*—It is related in a very interesting book, entitled *The Shepherd of Little Lambs*, that, during the course of a mission given at Marseilles, I think it was, a lady came to see one of the Fathers who preached. She saluted him affectedly, making use of silly, exaggerated words. He easily knew from that that the lady was in the habit of reading novels, and other books of the kind. "I see you read novels, madam!" "I do, Father, but, then, they do me no harm whatever; I merely read them for recreation." "It would be well for you, in that case, madam, before reading one of those books,

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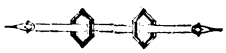
to kneel down and say to God: 'My God, I am going to read this romance to please Thee; I know there are bad doctrines in it, bad examples, and bad advice; no matter, I am going to read it to accomplish my baptismal vows, and to promote Thy glory and the salvation of my soul.'" "But, Father, I could never say such a prayer as that; it would be mocking God." "No, madam, if the book be good, you can and should say such a prayer." "But—but, Father—" "Ah! there it is—you begin to feel that the book is not so harmless as you thought at first. Tell me, daughter, were you more pious formerly than you are now?" "Yes, Father!" "And did you read novels, then?" "Oh! no, Father, not at all." "Did you once prefer serious studies, useful work, grave occupations?" "Yes, Father!" "And did you then read novels?" "No, Father!" "Were you once wiser, more obedient, less addicted to luxury and foolish expense?" "Yes, Father!" "And did you read novels?" "No, Father!" "You formerly frequented the sacraments with more relish and with more exactness?" "Alas! yes, Father!" "And did you read novels?" "No, Father!" "Well! madam, I have nothing more to say to you; you see yourself the danger of reading such silly productions."—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, V., 334.



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CHAPTER VIII.

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

Thou Shalt not Steal.

I.—ON ROBBERY.

335. *Robbers Struck Motionless.*—I have often told you, my dear friends, that God has eternity to punish sinners, and hence it is that He sometimes leaves them undisturbed. Nevertheless, He does not always act so, as is proved by the following pleasing anecdote. There was at Tremythonta, in the island of Cyprus, a holy bishop, named Spiridion, who lived in the fourth century. As he had been employed, before his episcopate, in keeping sheep, he made no difficulty, afterwards, of continuing the same exercise to earn his living, for in those days bishops were as poor as the faithful. Some robbers having entered his sheepfold by night, in order to rob it, felt themselves stopped by an invisible hand, and bound, as it were, with bonds that hindered them from escaping. St. Spiridion, coming in the morning, as usual, to turn out his flock, found them in this piteous state. As for them, ashamed to see themselves surprised in such a posture, they confessed their evil purpose.

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Christian compassion made him pray for them; and after having unbound them by his words, he gave them a sheep, telling them by way of an agreeable joke, that he wished to reward them for the trouble they had had in watching his flock all night. He farther told them that it would have been better for them to ask what they wanted than to endeavor to take it by fraud, and after remonstrating mildly with them on the life they were leading, he let them go in peace. Happy was it for those wretched men if they only came to understand how base and how degrading was the trade they followed.—SOZOMENES, *Eccles. Hist.*, Chap. XI.

336. *For a Dead Cow.*—The saints were men like us, my very dear friends, and it sometimes happened that they committed faults, even very grave ones. But then they had the humility to confess and do penance for them, in such wise that what should have turned to their confusion, became for them a crown of glory. St. Ephrem bewailed all his life long a folly of his youth. Going through a wood one winter's day, he saw a poor man's cow lying under a tree apparently fatigued or sick. Instead of driving her home to her owner, he had the cruelty to throw stones at her to make her rise, and then to chase her through the woods and fields, till, exhausted with fatigue, she fell dead in a ditch. The following night she was devoured by wolves or some other wild beasts. Ephrem kept his own secret, and no one suspected him; but God had seen what he did, and

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punished him in a very extraordinary manner. A month after this sad occurrence, he was sent by his parents to a village some distance off. Overtaken by night before he could reach there, he was obliged to ask lodging in a shepherd's hut; it was granted to him. Unhappily the shepherd was a drunkard, and, as he had drank a great deal that evening, he fell into a leaden sleep. Robbers availing themselves of the opportunity, came during the night and took away the greater part of his flock, without him perceiving. The owners hearing of the robbery, arrived almost immediately at the shepherd's hut, and there found Ephrem, whom they did not know. They accused him of having an understanding with the robbers, and being accessory to their crime. It was no use for him to declare his innocence, he was dragged away to prison, and left there till the affair should have been cleared up; he passed eight days in prison. Whilst he was there, he had a dream, in which he saw a most beautiful young man, who told him that the imprisonment he endured, the chains with which he was loaded, were the punishment of the crime he had committed, in causing the death of the poor man's cow. Some days after, Ephrem's innocence in regard to the robbery being fully established, he was released from prison. It is he himself, who relates all these particulars in his works, and he wept his sin till his last hour.—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 356.

337. *St. Spiridion's Chest.*—I know not, my dear

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friends, whether I have already spoken to you of St. Spiridion, bishop of Tremythonte, in the island of Cyprus, who lived in the fourth century. He was poor, notwithstanding his title of bishop, and derived his subsistence from a flock of sheep, which he often tended himself. But he was extremely charitable, and never refused to lend to those who were in need. When they came to borrow money of him, he gave them none with his own hands; he contented himself with showing where the chest was, and telling those who asked it of him to take whatever they required. When they came to bring him back the money they had borrowed, he made them put it in the chest, without observing whether they did or not. A man once abused this generous disinterestedness, for, thinking that he could easily cheat St. Spiridion, he took away with him again the money he pretended to put back in the box. Some time after, he had occasion to apply again to the holy bishop, and found him still disposed to assist him. St. Spiridion told him, as usual, to take what money he wanted out of the box; but the rogue found it empty. He immediately informed the Saint, who said to him: "It is very strange that you are the only one who has found nothing in the box. Perhaps it is because you failed to put back what you took the last time. Examine yourself, and, if it be so, regard this accident as an effect of the justice of God, who thus punishes your avarice and deceit." The borrower then confessed his knavery, and St. Spiridion discovered the truth

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of what he had only been supposing.—SOZOMENES, *Eccles. Hist.*, Chap. XI.

338. *St. Eloi's Arm-Chairs.*—St. Eloi, as you are doubtless aware, my dear friends, was a goldsmith before he became a bishop. But what particularly distinguished him was his unfailing honesty and integrity. He was very different, in that respect, from so many other workmen who manage to keep for themselves a portion of the materials given them when they are not restrained by the fear of God's judgments. However, Clotaire II., king of France, having been informed of St. Eloi's skill as a goldsmith, cast his eyes upon him to carry out a design he had in his mind. He wanted to have a new sort of chair made all of gold and precious stones, and for that purpose he gave a great quantity of gold and jewels to St. Eloi, who received the whole with weight and measure, and went immediately to work on the model that had been given him. But, instead of one chair that was expected of him, he contrived to make two of the same size with the materials furnished. He, nevertheless, at first presented only one to the king, who was well satisfied with it. St. Eloi having afterwards presented the second, Clotaire, expecting nothing more, was much surprised; he could not persuade himself that what was given to St. Eloi had been sufficient to make two seats; he could only be convinced by the weight, which was found to correspond exactly with that of the gold and jewels given. This showed how widely the

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holy goldsmith differed from some other jewellers, who, to conceal their fraud, say that there is always some waste in the melting down of metals.—SAINT OUEN, *Life of St. Eloi.*

339. *The House Built by St. Eloi.*—A truly upright and honest man carries delicacy of conscience very far when there is question of the goods of others. We find several examples of this in the life of St. Eloi; but here is one that has always struck me very much. Dagobert I., king of France, had given him a fine house in Paris. The holy goldsmith made so large a monastery of it that it contained almost three hundred religious, under the direction of the holy Abbess St. Aure. In order to finish this great edifice, a small space was required that belonged to the king. St. Eloi drew out the plan of it, so as to know its exact dimensions, and then asked it of the king. He obtained it without difficulty; but having afterwards discovered a mistake in the measurement of the ground, and that there was a small quantity more than he had told the king, he was so afflicted that, stopping the work immediately, he ran to the palace to ask pardon. This he did prostrate on the ground as though he had committed a crime, and even offered to undergo any torment to expiate it. The king, much surprised by such great delicacy of conscience, said to the lords of his court and others who were present: "Behold the fidelity of those who live according to Jesus Christ. My governors and officers do not scruple to take possession of whole

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estates and lordships, and this servant of God, as you see, would not dare to take from me one inch of ground beyond what I gave him." Dagobert, wishing at the same time to reward such great probity, doubled the donation he had made to St. Eloi.—SAINT OUEN, *Vie de St. Eloi.*

340. *The Unwilling Camel-Driver.*—To rob is forbidden, not only by the law of God, but also by the laws of men; hence it is that justice punishes that crime so severely. Here is a pleasing story that may instruct whilst amusing you. A Christian merchant, residing at Aleppo, in Turkey in Asia, had entrusted a Turkish camel-driver with a certain number of bales of silk to convey to Constantinople. He set out himself with the camel-driver, but had scarcely made half the journey when he fell sick, and could not keep up with the caravan, which arrived long before him. Some weeks having passed, the camel-driver seeing no sign of his man, supposed him to be dead, sold the bales of silk, became rich, and changed his profession. The Christian merchant at length arrived, found him out after a long search, and claimed his merchandize. The rogue pretended not to know him, and even dared to deny that he had ever been a camel-driver. The cadi, that is to say, the magistrate, before whom the affair was brought, said to the Christian: "What do you demand?" "Twenty bales of silk which I gave this man to transport on camel-back to Constantinople." "And you, what have you to answer to that?" "I know not what he

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means with his bales of silk and his camels; I never saw or knew him." "But, Christian accuser, what proof can you give of what you advance?" The merchant, much embarrassed, although confident of being in the right, could give no other proofs except that illness had prevented him from following the camel-driver to Constantinople. The cadi then told them that they were a pair of fools, and ordered them to retire. He turned his back to them, and pretended to occupy himself with something else. But, as they were going out together, he went to a window and called out: "Ho, camel-driver, a word with you!" The Turk immediately turns his head, without thinking that he had denied that profession. Then the cadi, who had seen through it all, had them brought back, administered a severe castigation to the robber, who confessed his fault, and condemned him, not only to pay the Christian merchant for his silk, but also a considerable fine for the false oath he had taken.—FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, II., 151.

341. *A Hermit's Field of Barley.*—It often happens in the world, my young friends, that people do their business at the expense of others; that is called address, cleverness, tact; but in reality it is cheating and injustice, and the seventh commandment of God expressly forbids it. In 1757, during the famous Seven Years' War, which took place between Frederick the Great, king of Prussia, and most of the other powers of Europe, a captain of cavalry was ordered to go and forage in a certain district. He

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sets out with his company. Arrived at the place appointed, he perceived that it was a secluded valley where there was nothing but woods. All at once he discovered a little hut, he knocks at the door, and an old hermit with a white beard comes to open it. "Father," said the captain, "show me a field where my men can forage." "I will go immediately, captain!" He places himself at the head of the horsemen and conducts them out of the valley. After a quarter of an hour's march, they came to a fine field of barley: "Here is what we want," said the captain. "Let us go a little farther," answered the old hermit, "and you shall be better satisfied." So they went a little farther, found another field of barley, and he told them: "Now you can forage." The horsemen immediately dismount, reap the field from one end to the other, tie the barley in sheaves and place it on the backs of their horses. On the way back, the captain said to the hermit: "Father, you took us too far; the first field of barley we came to was better than this." "So it was, captain, but it was not mine, and this belongs to me." There, you see, children, is delicacy of conscience; there is what you do not find amongst people of the world, who are actuated only by the honor and good faith of an honest man.—FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, I., 548.

II.—ON USURY AND EXTORTION.

342. *Down One-Half!*—Let me tell you, to-day, my dear friends, the frightful story of a wretched

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usurer, who speculated on public misery to make unlawful profits. Shame, eternal shame to those wretched monopolizers! It was in the fourteenth century, I believe; a terrible famine having broken out at Rimini, in Italy, the exorbitant price of grain threw desolation amongst the inhabitants. It was only the usurer of whom I have spoken to you that rejoiced, because his granaries were full. Nevertheless, although the corn was already beyond all price, he refused to sell his, hoping that it would rise still higher; and in order to escape importunities he even retired to the country. Every day he went to walk on the high road, and never failed to ask the people coming from the town how corn was selling. When told that it was still going up, he heaved a compassionate sigh, but laughed within himself. But it happened that two wealthy inhabitants of Rimini having bought enormous quantities of grain in Apulia, in the kingdom of Naples, in order to provide for the necessity of the moment, the corn fell at a single stroke to half the price. The usurer, who proposed to return that very day to the town, to profit by the misery of his townsmen, inquired, as usual, of the passers by, what was the price of corn. What was his surprise to see joyous troops of villagers coming along, driving before them asses loaded with corn "What has happened?" he asked, trembling with anxiety. "Praises be to God!" cried all the peasants at once, "corn is down one-half this morning!"— "*Down one-half!*" slowly repeated the astonished

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usurer. He runs to the city, people meet him, salute him, bid him good morning, but to all these attentions he can only reply with these words slowly articulated: "*Down one-half!*" On reaching his home, his wife and children could get no other answer from him. He took to his bed, his ghastly countenance giving rise to serious alarm. They run for a doctor, who arrives in all haste, and asks him what is the matter with him. *Down one-half!* murmurs the unhappy man. A priest arrives, wants to hear his confession, speaks to him of trusting in the mercy of God. "*Down one-half!*" repeats the dying man, whom every one regards as stricken with madness. His condition became worse and worse; medicine and care were alike ineffectual, and the infamous usurer expired articulating one last time the words that seemed to be the warrant of divine justice: *Down one-half!*—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 411.

343. *The Alms of the Bakers of Lyons.*—I think I have already told you, children, that I am very glad when I see rogues, extortioners or persons who are too covetous, taken in their own snares. That often happens by the dispensation of God, who cannot bear injustice, and often punishes it even in this life. The following story goes to prove the assertion. The bakers of Lyons, wanting to raise the price of their bread, about 1775, if I am not mistaken, went to M. Dugas, provost of the merchants of that city. After a long explanation of their reasons, they retired without waiting for his answer, but left on the table

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a purse containing two hundred gold pieces, that is to say, about four thousand francs, not doubting but that new kind of advocate would effectually plead their cause. Some days after, they again presented themselves to receive the magistrate's answer. "Gentlemen," said M. Dugas in a good-natured, off-hand way, yet with a certain degree of sly humor, "I have weighed your reasons in the scales of justice, and I have not found them of sufficient weight. I do not think it necessary that the people should suffer for an unwarrantable rise in the price of flour, which cannot last for any length of time. For the rest, I have distributed the money you left me amongst the hospitals of the city, because I thought you intended it for no other use. I see plainly that since you find yourselves in a position to give such a donation for charity, you cannot lose as much as you say in your business." So saying, the worthy provost saluted them very graciously, and retired. The bakers retired, too, but the chronicler of the event seems to have taken a malicious pleasure in applying to them that line with which La Fontaine ends his fable of *The Fox and the Crow:*

Jurant, mais un peu tard, qu'on ne les y prendrait plus.*

—Pilasster, *Dict. d'Educ.*, II., 124.

311. *Wood That Costs Very Dear.*—There is no thing more revolting to me, my very dear friends, than to see wretches abuse the misery of their poor

* Swearing, but too late, that he should be caught there no more.

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fellow-creatures to extort money from them, selling them things for two or three times their value. So I am not sorry when I see something come upon them that pays them back in their own coin. This is just what happened in 1794, in a little village of Westphalia, one of the provinces of Prussia. A poor French refugee was in that village in the depth of winter, a most severe winter, too; he wanted to purchase some wood, and applied to an individual whom he met in the street with a load of wood. The townsman, seeing that he had a stranger to deal with, put an exorbitant price on the wood; he asked three pounds, that is to say, about sixty francs, although it was worth no more than eight or ten. The bargain made and the wood delivered, the wood seller goes to have his breakfast at an inn, and is not ashamed to boast of having *plucked* a stranger, selling him for sixty francs what was worth but eight. *It was all fair*, added he, laughing, *as the wood belonged to me*. His breakfast ended, he asks the landlord for his bill. The latter, indignant at the man's villainy, coolly told him it was three pounds. "How? three pounds for a piece of bread, a piece of cheese, and two glasses of beer!" "Yes, sir, what you took was my property, and I have a right to put what price I please upon it, so, if you are not satisfied to pay my demand, let us go before a magistrate." "That is just what I want; let us go at once." When the magistrate had heard the two stories, he hesitated not to decide in favor of the

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innkeeper, and condemned the hard-hearted man to pay the sixty francs demanded. As soon as the worthy innkeeper received the money, he gave eight francs to the wood seller, and went with the other fifty two francs to the unfortunate Frenchman, who had been the victim of the morning's shameful bargain.—*Cat. de Rodez*, V., 374.

315. *A Cure of Human fat.*—A man who has enriched himself by cheating and defrauding may sometimes applaud himself for having *done his business* so well, as they say in the world; but, dear friends, there will come a time when he will not be quite so happy, not to speak of the eternity of torments which awaits him, if he do not make restitution. Here is an interesting story on that subject. A very rich man, whose name charity forbids me to mention, fell dangerously ill; it was at the end of the last century, certain sores that he had on his body were already beginning to mortify, and every one saw plainly that there was no chance of his recovery. His whole fortune had been acquired by fraud and extortion, and yet he would not hear of restitution, under pretence that his three children would be reduced to indigence. Hearing of this, a learned and pious clergyman says to some one: "Go and tell him that I have a cure for mortification, and I am sure he will ask to see me. Just as the priest expected, he no sooner heard that an old priest had a cure for mortification than he must absolutely see him. "They tell me, sir," said he, "that you have a sure remedy for mortification."

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"I have, sir; the cure is infallible, it will not give you any pain, it is very simple, but it is extraordinarily dear."—"No matter, if it cost ten thousand francs I am resolved to have it. In what does it consist?" "This is it: to have melted over the mortified wound a little human fat from a living person. It does not require much, so that, for ten thousand francs you will, doubtless, find some one that will consent to have their hand, for instance, burned —for a short quarter of an hour."—"Alas! father, I fear I could find no one to do it for that price." "Well! then, it seems to me a very easy thing to find some one to agree to do it. You have three sons who love you well; send for the eldest and say to him: 'Son, I do not doubt your affection for me, so I will make you the heir of all my wealth, if you will only give me one last proof of it. It is to burn your left hand for a quarter of an hour so that the grease which will drop from it may cure me.' Should he refuse you this mark of affection, you will make the same proposal to the second, and, in case of refusal, to the third; one of the three will be sure to accept it, in order to become your heir." The patient followed this wise counsel, and had his three sons brought to him one by one; but alas! none of them would consent to what their father required. They even could not help saying amongst themselves: *What a queer man father is to ask us to do such a thing as that!* Then the ingenious clergyman, left alone with the dying man, said to him earnestly:

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"Now, sir, would not you be very foolish to undergo the fire of hell for all eternity, to enrich children who would not suffer even their hand to be burned for one quarter of an hour for your sake? You must admit that it would be a piece of folly, at which they would be the first to laugh."—"You are right, reverend father! I confess I never thought of it in that light. I beg of you not to go till I have confessed my sins, and taken means to repair all the injustice I have committed." He, in fact, did so, and died reconciled with God.—LASSAUSSE, *Cat. de l'Empire*, 264.

246. *The Weight of a Sack of Earth.*—Listen to this story, my young friends, and try to profit by it: An inhabitant of Rhenish Prussia, already very rich, but not yet content, contrived by his adroit cunning and knavery to take from a poor woman a small field adjoining his own vast property; it was her only means of living. Overwhelmed by this misfortune and too poor to enter a law-suit, she goes to the spoiler and tells him: "Since you must have my little field, which came down to me from my fathers, and was my only means of support, allow me, at least, to fill a sack with the earth of it, that I may keep as a memento in my house."—"If that will content you, you may have it," said the hard-hearted man dryly and contemptuously. She then took the largest sack she could find, filled it with the earth of her field, tied it with a strong cord, and tried to place it on her shoulders. But, being unable to succeed, she besought the new owner to assist her. In order to

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get rid of her, he was fain to render her this last service; but he, too, was unable to lift the sack. He was going to call one of his servants, when the poor woman, inspired by the justice of her cause, said to him in a solemn and dignified tone: "Stay as you are, sir!—you have taken my field from me, so you may keep my sack. Only tell me one thing: you have found it impossible to raise this sack of earth, how will you, then, bear on your conscience, unhappy man, the weight of my whole field? Are you not afraid that the just God will make use of it to crush you?" At these words, so vehemently uttered, the spoiler turned pale, a cold shiver ran through his frame, and some days after, he gave the poor woman back her spot of ground.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.* III., 374.

347. *The Ill-paid Servants.*—One of the most crying crimes, dear friends, even in the eyes of men, is that of refusing to pay servants or working-people their wages; or, what is just the same thing, fraudulently withholding from them the whole or part of it. Those poor unhappy people are sufficiently to be pitied in being obliged to serve others, without depriving them of the little they earn so hardly. Furthermore, my good friends, God never blesses those who act in this way. Here is a proof of it. In a village of Upper Austria, the German name of which is not easily remembered, there dwelt a rich proprietor who was, moreover, endowed with great skill in managing his affairs, at least, according to the world. When engaging servants, he always promised them

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high wages by the year, and thus managed to secure good and capable ones. But when, after having exhausted themselves by hard toil, those poor servants expected to receive, at the end of the year, the fine wages promised them, they were cruelly disappointed, and in this way: Their master admitted, indeed, that he had promised such a sum, but he had taken care to draw up a detailed account of a thousand little expenses, which he pretended to charge to the servants. On one, he reckoned the expense of farriery and medicine for his ailing horses; from another he deducted the quantity of milk which the cows ought to have given and did not; one he made pay for the damage done to the agricultural and other implements used; another, the crockery accidentally broken in the course of the year. Nothing could be more unjust or more unreasonable than these charges, but justice could do nothing, because the master always made his arrangements so as to throw the blame on the servants. The latter went away, and he always contrived by cunning and by fine promises to find others on the same conditions. This state of things ought to have made him rich, it would seem, in a short time. Not at all, my dear children! as I told you just now, God cannot bless those who commit such crying injustice towards their domestics. Our rich townsman became so reduced in circumstances that all he had was sold at auction, and he himself had to end his days in an hospital.—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 376.

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III.—DEPOSITS AND THINGS FOUND.

348. *Two Hundred Silver Pennies Found.*—What we find, my dear children, we cannot keep, since it does not belong to us; we must even make all possible search to find out the real owner. St. Augustine relates an anecdote on this subject which he heard himself from a worthy man, when he was in Milan. This man was so poor that he hired himself to a schoolmaster. He one day found a bag containing about 200 silver pennies of Roman money, which might be nearly 300 francs. As he was faithful to the law of God, he knew well that he must give up what he had found, but he knew not to whom he was bound to give it. Then he wrote this notice on a paper, which he posted up in a public place:

Notice.

ANY ONE WHO HAS LATELY LOST MONEY CAN HAVE IT BY APPLYING AT SUCH A NUMBER, IN SUCH A STREET.

It so happened that he who had lost the money, and was looking for it everywhere in great distress, saw this notice, read it, and went in all haste to seek this poor man. The latter put several questions to him concerning the marks, the texture and the seal of the bag, the amount of money contained in it, &c., fearing to be mistaken in giving it to a man who claimed it without its belonging to him. The claimant answered exactly all the questions put to him, and the poor man gave him what he had found

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Full of joy and gratitude, the owner immediately offered him the sum of twenty pennies, which was the tenth part of what the bag contained. But see, children, the delicacy of those who are really Christians; the man who had found the money, poor as he was absolutely refused to receive the reward. He was offered ten, which he likewise refused; the owner, at last, came down to five, but all in vain. When the generous owner saw this species of obstinacy, he exclaimed: "You will receive nothing? well! I declare to you I have lost nothing." And he threw the bag on the street. Overcome by this singular argument, the poor man at length accepted what was offered him, but the day had not passed till he had distributed all of it amongst the poor.—St. Augustine, *Sermons*, No. 178.

339. *A Tartar's Purse.*—The world talks loudly of honor, loyalty, probity; but for my part, children, I have more confidence in one good Christian than in fifty people who are honest according to the world. It is related, in the *Lettres édifiantes*, that a brilliant Tartar officer riding on horseback through one of the gates of Pekin, the capital of China, happened to let his purse fall. It was picked up by a poor Chinese workman, who had the happiness of being a Christian, and who ran after the horseman to give it to him. But the latter, unaware of the motive the man had in following him, threw a contemptuous look upon him, and spurred his horse to avoid him. The poor Christian continued to follow him at a distance,

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and entered the house into which he saw him go. The Tartar, much exasperated, asked him haughtily who he was and what he wanted. "My lord, you lost your purse at the city gate; I picked it up, and ran after you to restore it." "It is singular that you should act so, since the laws of the empire permit one to keep anything they find." "Yes, but I am a Christian, and my religion obliges me to restore what I find to the rightful owner." This reply excited the Tartar's curiosity; he wished to know what sort of religion that might be, came to the Catholic missionary, and was instructed in the mysteries of our holy religion.—REYRE, *Anec. Chret.*, 239.

350. *The Barber of Pekin.*—It is only our holy religion, my friends, that can prescribe duties of conscience which are not seen; other laws may occupy themselves with exterior actions, but they are powerless in regulating thoughts. A Jesuit missionary, who was preaching the gospel in China, in the last century, relates the following story of a barber. As is usual there with people of his profession, this man went from side to side in the streets of Pekin, shaking an instrument composed of knotted cords, which, striking against each other, made a peculiar sound to warn those who wished to be shaved to present themselves to him. He one day found a purse in which there were twenty gold pieces. He takes it up, and looks around to see if he could discover the person that lost it. After a careful scrutiny of the people around him, it seemed to him that it might

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possibly belong to a gentleman who was walking before him; he accosts him, and asks him if he had lost anything. The gentleman searches his pockets, and cries in dismay: "I have lost my purse, containing twenty gold pieces."—"Well! don't be uneasy, here it is, just as you lost it."—"But who are you? what is your name? where do you live?"—"It is little matter to you who I am, what my name is, or where I live; it suffices for you to know that I am a Christian, and one of those who practise the religion of the Master of heaven. It forbids us not only to take what is in houses, but even to keep what we find by chance." Hearing this, the gentleman, full of admiration for a doctrine so pure and so disinterested, went immediately to the church of the Christians, and asked to be instructed in the true religion. This charming story, my dear children, was related by the missionary, the very year in which it happened, to the Emperor of China himself, who could, thereby, judge of the difference which exists between his religion and ours.—Reyre, *Anec. Chret.*, 240.

351. *Thirty Thousand Francs Found.*—We have no right, dear friends, to touch what does not belong to us; so, when money is placed in our hands by way of deposit, it must be returned exactly as we received it. A worthy man in an Eastern city, the name of which I did not learn, was to bring 30,000 francs to a notary. He learned that a missionary was going to preach, in a little while, in a neighboring church; and, in order to have the pleasure of hearing him, he

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went to the house of a person of his acquaintance whom he knew to be very honest, and requested him to keep the money for him while he went to hear the sermon. "Open that cupboard," said he, "and put into it what you will." He opened the cupboard, placed his bag in it, and went to church. After the sermon, he came to claim his money. "What money?" he was asked in a tone of surprise. "Why, the bag of 30,000 francs I placed in that cupboard." "If you put it there, take it." He ran to get his money, but it was no longer there. He thought, at first, that it was a jest, but the serious and angry way in which the owner of the house spoke, convinced him that he had been robbed. He goes out, and, instead of repairing to the notary's, he goes to the house of one of his friends, where the preacher happened to be; he tells them the story of the deposit. At the end of a quarter of an hour, the missionary goes out, without saying anything, and repairs in all haste to the house of the thief. Without entering into any detail, he accosts him directly and tells him plainly: "I come for the 30,000 francs that Mr. Such-a-one left in your charge, about three hours ago, and which you deny having received. You think, perhaps, that you did that without being seen, but I have a witness to produce against you. Give up the money, or you are ruined forever." At the word *witness*, the unhappy man changed countenance, and appeared visibly agitated. Seeing that, the missionary draws a crucifix from his pocket and places it before his eyes,

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saying to him still more earnestly: "There is the witness against you, and to whom you must one day account for your criminal action!" The culprit confessed his crime and gave up the 30,000 francs; the missionary took it back himself to the poor man from whom it had been taken, who little expected to see it again.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, V., 416.

352. *Emile's Pretty Little Cannon.*—You all know, my good little friends, that we are never permitted to take what does not belong to us; you cannot even take the least thing at home without the permission of your parents. You must not do, then, what was done by a little boy of seven years old whom I knew. He was called Emile, and lived not far from the town of Lens. One day, returning from there, he appeared so gay that every one noticed it. His father sees in his hands a little copper cannon, mounted on two pretty little wheels of the same metal. "Ha! ha! my boy," said he, "you want to join the artillery. What a pretty little cannon! Who gave you that nice present?" "No one, papa, I bought it in Lens." "And pray, who gave you the money?" said the father quickly. "Papa, it was a little twenty-sous piece that I found." "And where did you find it, sir?" "I found it on the mantel-piece in your room." "You shall dine on dry bread, sir, to-day. What is on my mantel-piece is not lost at all, and, even if it were, you have no right to take it and dispose of it."—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, V., 360.

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CHAPTER IX.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

Thou Shalt not Bear False Witness.

I.—FALSE TESTIMONY.

353. *Dogs Punishing a Perjurer.*—There are few amongst you, my little friends, who do not remember the story of the wicked Achab and of Queen Jezabel, his wife, still more impious than himself. The king, wishing to enlarge his gardens, could never prevail upon a virtuous Israëlite, named Naboth, to sell him his vineyard, which lay close by. Jezabel excited the king to take possession of it by force, and put Naboth to death. For that purpose, she bribed two false witnesses, who swore that Naboth had blasphemed against God and spoke evil of the king. The unfortunate man was taken outside the city and stoned to death without ever being heard in his own defence. Achab, apprised of his death, went in his chariot to take possession of his victim's vineyard, when the prophet Elias came to meet him, and announced to him, on the part of the Lord, *that the*

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dogs who had licked the blood of the just Naboth should one day lick his own blood in the same place; that his posterity should perish miserably to the very last shoot, and that the dogs should in like manner devour the body of Jezabel, his wife. This decree, as just as it was terrible, was executed to the letter, some years after, as you have read in your Sacred History.—IV. *Kings*, Chap. IX.

354. *The Trial of Susanna.*—Human justice may be at fault, my dear friends, let it take what precautions it may; but divine justice is sure to find out the guilty and punish them sooner or later. It often overtakes them even in this life, as we learn from the story of the chaste Susanna, which I am going to tell you, although you may have, perhaps, read it in Sacred History. Whilst the Jews were captives in Babylon, they were accustomed to elect every year two men of a certain age, to decide the disputes that might turn up amongst them. One evening, after these judges had held their court at the house of a virtuous Israëlite, named Joakim, they walked out through his garden, which was large and fine. They there found Susanna, wife of Joakim. She was a person endowed with the rarest and most admirable qualities. The two old men approached her; and trampling under foot all respect for their age and for their dignity, they were not ashamed to do the devil's work, threatening her with death if she refused to offend God. Far from being intimidated, the chaste Susanna said to them: "Never will I consent to sin

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in the presence of the Lord, who sees me; I would rather die innocent than live guilty." This courageous resistance, instead of making them blush for shame, served only to irritate them, and they swore to be revenged. Next day, having assembled the people, they accused Susanna of an enormous crime and stated that they had themselves seen her commit it, under a tree in her garden. No one could refuse to believe them, because they were venerable by their age and by the office of judge which they exercised. Consequently, the unfortunate woman was condemned to be stoned to death, and she was immediately taken outside the city, that this unjust sentence might be executed. Whilst the crowd was passing along the streets of the city, God inspired a child of twelve years old, the young prophet Daniel, to reveal Susanna's innocence. He all at once cried out: *I am not guilty of the innocent blood you are going to shed.* Young as he was, God permitted that what he said attracted attention; he was questioned, a short discussion followed, and finally they all went back to the place where the trial had taken place. There, the little prophet takes one of the iniquitous judges aside, and asks him in a low voice under which tree he had seen Susanna. *Under a mastic tree*, answered the old man. He privately put the same question to the other: *I saw her under a turpentine tree*, replies the latter. With these two contradictory answers, the inspired child had no difficulty in convincing the people of the imposture of the two

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accusers and the innocence of the accused. Thus, by a secret judgment of God, those corrupt old men were condemned to undergo the very punishment they would have inflicted on the virtuous Israëlite.—*Daniel*, Chap. XIII.

355. *The Hand cut off by St. Athanasius.*—The Arians, those audacious and restless heretics, who dared to deny the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, had no more formidable adversary than the great St. Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria, in Egypt. There was no intrigue which they did not employ, no means they did not attempt, to try to ruin him; they had him banished seven times. But the most singular accusation they brought against him was this: At the Council of Tyre, they accused the holy prelate of having cruelly killed Arsenus, Bishop of the Meletians, and of having cut off his hand to make use of in magical operations and invocations of the devil. Before bringing forward this grave charge, they had taken care to spirit away Bishop Arsenus to a distant part of a remote country; furthermore, they presented to the assembly a hand, which they said belonged to the murdered bishop. You may well think, dear friends, that this was a serious affair; it was carefully discussed, and St. Athanasius having neither proof nor witness to defend himself, his enemies prevailed. But God does not abandon His servants; what did He do? He ordained it so that Arsenus escaped from his retreat and came to the accused patriarch. The latter goes to the council

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with the supposed dead man, but taking care to make him hide one of his hands in his cloak. What was every one's surprise and stupefaction when St. Athanasius presented Arsenus living and well! "I am accused of having killed this bishop; see now if it be true, unless, indeed, I raised him to life again on purpose to bring him hither! I am, likewise, accused of having cut off his hand; Arsenus, show them your other hand" (Arsenus draws it from under his cloak and shows it); "you see he has still his two hands, and I think God gave him no more." I leave you to think, my dear friends, on what side were shame and confusion, and on what side indignation and just anger.—TILLEMONT, *Eccles. Hist.*, VIII., 45.

356. *The Accusing Axe.*—Let us beware, dear friends, of rashly condemning others, even when there are some appearances against them. People have often had cause to repent being too hasty, even after having taken many precautions; how would it be, then, if none were taken? St. Augustine himself relates what was near happening to one of his friends, in consequence of a rash judgment. At the time when Alipus was studying under him, at Carthage, he was taken for a robber, and arrested, whilst walking alone opposite the hall of justice, turning over in his mind something that had been given him to recite. The thing occurred in this way: Another scholar, who was really a robber, having gained, unperceived, the terrace opening on the Goldsmiths' street, took to chopping the lead off the railing of the terrace with

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an axe which he had brought with him under his cloak. At the noise he made, the goldsmiths, who were under the terrace, began to cry out, and sent people to seize the robber. The latter, seeing himself discovered, and hearing the shouts, takes to flight and leaves his axe behind, lest it should be found in his possession. Alipus, who had not seen him go up on the terrace, seeing him go away so fast, and anxious to know the cause of his flight, goes up himself, finds the axe and takes it. He was looking at it in surprise, when the people, sent to see whence the noise proceeded, came to the spot. Seeing the axe in his hand, they seized him and brought him before the magistrate to be tried, thinking they had really caught the robber in the fact. Alipus had no witness but God: He came to his assistance in due time. For, as they were leading him to prison, or, perhaps, even to punishment, a celebrated architect came along, recognized Alipus, and took him aside to inquire how all this came to pass. Alipus having told him the whole affair, the architect, notwithstanding all the tumult, obliged the populace to follow him, and went straight to the house of the real thief. A child of his, who had even followed him to the terrace, having come to the door, Alipus recognized him and told the architect. The latter showed the axe to the child and asked him whose it was. *It is ours*, said he simply, and answered with the same ease all the questions put to him. Thus all the blame fell on the inmates of that house: the

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people were all much astonished, and Alipus, fully exonerated, learned by his own experience how careful we should be to discern the truth and not to believe accusations too easily, even when they appear to be well founded, if we would not expose ourselves to condemn others rashly.—St. Augustine, *Conf.*, B. VI., Ch. XI.

II.—ON FALSEHOOD.

357. *St. Athanasius and His Bark.*—Lying is never permissible, my dear friends, as you well know; but we are not always obliged to make the truth known. Thus, instead of answering a question directly, you may answer it adroitly, provided you do not tell a falsehood. I find a curious example of this in the life of St Athanasius, who was so long persecuted by the Ariens. One day, having been compelled to fly in all haste, he entered a boat which he found on the banks of the Nile, and went up the river towards the Thebaïd. The person sent to kill him, hearing of his escape, pursued him as fast as he could; but he was outstripped by a friend of Athanasius', who apprised the saint that he was closely pursued. His companion then advised him to make for the desert. He, on the contrary, turned his boat to go down again to Alexandria, whence he came, "to show," he said, "that He who protects us is mightier than those who persecute us." All he then did was to conceal himself at the bottom of the bark. They

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soon met the boat in which was the persecutor, who asked them if Athanasius was far off, or if it was long since they left him. Guessing the Saint's intention in ordering the bark to be turned, the people in his boat simply answered: "He is not very far away, and you can easily overtake him if you wish." Hearing this the other passed on and continued his pursuit. You may easily understand that he did not find the holy patriarch. It was thus that the great St. Athanasius, without having recourse to falsehood, but simply by means of an evasive though true reply, escaped the hands of his enemies.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 449.

358. *Burial of a Living Person.*—Amongst the falsehoods punished by God in the most signal manner, even in this life, few have struck me so much as the one I am about to relate. St. James, Bishop of Nisibe, in Mesopotamia, who lived in the fourth century, going one day into a neighboring town, some poor persons came to him, and besought him to give them the means of burying one of them, who made believe to be dead, although he was not. The good bishop cheerfully granted their request; he even offered up a prayer to God for the deceased; he begged Him to forgive him his sins and receive him amongst the blessed. At the moment when he uttered these words, the person who was pretending to be dead did really die, and the saint gave what was necessary to bury his body. When he had gone a little way, the authors of this

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shameful stratagem told him who was lying down to rise up. But seeing that he did not hear them, and that his pretended death had become real, they ran after St. James, and, throwing themselves at his feet, they confessed their crime, adding that poverty was the cause of their imposture. They conjured him to forgive them their fault, and to restore the dead to life. Then that admirable man, imitating the clemency of Our Lord, granted what they asked, and, by a new miracle, restored to life by his prayers he whom God had struck dead in punishment of his deceit.—THEODORET, *Eccles. Hist.*, B. I.

359. *The Archbishop of Canterbury.*—I think I have already told you, my good friends, that we must never say anything contrary to the truth, even to extricate ourselves from some difficulty. But we may either suppress the truth, or answer in an evasive manner, as did St. Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, in England. Persecuted unjustly by King Henry II., his sovereign, he was several times obliged to fly and conceal himself. He took refuge once in a hermitage near Sempringham, where he remained three whole years. During that time he walked always on foot, clothed as a monk, and bearing the name of *Brother Christian*. Nevertheless, being unaccustomed to travel in such a toilsome way he had much to suffer, especially during a cold and rainy autumn. One day, overcome by fatigue, he threw himself on the ground, and said to those who accompanied him: "I can go no farther; try to procure

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me a little nourishment, or I cannot walk." They brought him a poor horse, without either bridle or saddle, laid their cloaks on the animal's back, and placed the archbishop thereon, though with great difficulty. In this sorry plight they journeyed on for some time, when they saw approaching at full speed some armed men, who addressed themselves directly to St. Thomas, and said abruptly: "Are not you the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom we have been long seeking?" "My friends," he replied, "judge for yourselves; is this the equipage of an archbishop?" They did not recognize him, and put no further questions. Thus, by a very simple word, he got out of his difficulty, without offending the good God.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 452.

350. *Is it Lawful to Deceive Robbers?*—We are never allowed to tell a falsehood, my dear friends, even though it were to save our life, our honor, our purse, or to extricate ourselves from any embarrassment of any kind whatsoever. The saints were scrupulous in this regard. I have read in the Life of St. John de Kenty, a Polish priest, that three times in the course of his life he visited Rome, the Holy City. He always travelled on foot, carrying on his back the little bag that contained his linen, his effects, and the bread which was his nourishment. In one of his toilsome journeys he was attacked by highway robbers, who took from him everything they could. After having carefully searched him, they asked him if he had nothing else which they could take. He

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reflected a moment, and answered that he had nothing more of any value; they allowed him to continue his journey, and went away. Saint John de Kenty had only gone some paces, when he remembered that he had sewed some gold pieces in his cloak, according to the custom of travellers from his country. He immediately ran after the robbers, confessed to them that he had not told the truth, because he had forgotten this money, and freely offered it to them. Astonished at this delicacy of conscience, not only did the robbers refuse to accept the money, but even gave him back what they had taken from him. —Godescard, *Vies des Saints*, 20th October.

361. *Little Washington and the Cherry-Tree.*—How beautiful it is, my good young friends, to see a little child tell the truth even at the risk of being punished or reprimanded! For we are never to tell a lie were it even to save our life. The illustrious George Washington, who afterwards became President of the United States, had received, as a present, when he was six years old, a little hatchet, with which he kept chopping everything that came in his way. He one day amused himself stripping the bark off a magnificent English cherry-tree, which appeared to be completely spoiled. His father, perceiving this mischief, angrily inquired who had done it, adding that he would rather have lost a hundred dollars than that tree, which he had prized very highly. No one could find out the culprit. At length, little George, who was not present at the moment, being one day in the

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garden with his hatchet, his father perceived him and immediately guessed that he was the author of the mischief. He asked him if he knew who it was that had spoiled his cherry-tree. The child hesitated a moment, then answered: "I cannot tell a lie, papa! —it was I that cut it with my little hatchet." Hearing this confession so frank and honest, Washington's father could not be angry with the child. "Come to my arms, my son!" said he, "the honesty with which you confess your fault repays me an hundred-fold for the loss of my cherry-tree. I value your candor and sincerity more than I would a thousand cherry-trees, though they were loaded with the finest fruit." In after years, my friends, it was observed that the great man of whose infant years I have been telling you this anecdote, never could and never did violate truth in any case whatever; so true it is that people retain all their lives the good habits contracted in their youth.—Noel, *Cat. de Rodez*, V., 467.

362. *The Protestant Catholic.*—Falsehood is odious in all circumstances, my friends, but it is much more so in matters of religion; it is then an unpardonable crime. It is related that a Protestant gentleman, who lived in Austrian Poland, wishing to obtain the situation of clerk of a court, which, according to the laws of the country, could not be given to a heretic, made believe that he was a Catholic. His shameful fraud was not discovered until some time after, and word was brought of it to the Emperor Joseph II., who was not himself very scrupulous on the score of

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religion. The Governor of Lemberg was charged to investigate the affair. Our gentleman confessed that he was a Protestant. "But," added he, as if to justify himself, "I am a Catholic in heart, and to profess the faith openly I am only waiting till I have secured some property left me in Saxony, which I could not obtain unless I outwardly practised Protestantism." In making his report to the Emperor, the Governor of Lemberg was in favor of being lenient, on account of the gentleman's capacity and talents. "Talents!" replied Joseph II. quickly; "who can ever depend on the word of a man who is not ashamed to lie on the subject of religion, and to sport with what there is most sacred? Let him be dismissed immediately!" It was done accordingly, and who will venture to say that the Emperor's decision was not a just one?—FILASSIER, *Dict. Hist. d'Educ.*, II., 593.

363. *The Little Martyr of Truth.*—Some three or four years ago I read a story that went the round of the papers, and which I could not read without shedding tears. I am sure, children, it will affect you in the same way. An American paper mentions the case as being brought before the authorities in the town of Madison. A good little boy of nine years old, an orphan from his earliest infancy, was adopted by a farmer named Marquette, from the hospital in Milwaukee. Some time after his installation in his new family, the little boy having had occasion to remark some very bad conduct on the part of the farmer's wife, thought it his duty to inform the hus-

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band. But the woman denied the charge so vehemently that the farmer was convinced that his wife had been calumniated. The wife then insisted that the boy should be whipped till he retracted what he had said; and the husband taking a scourge, suspended the child from a beam in the room and whipped him for nearly two hours with so much barbarity that the blood streamed on the ground. He stopped then and asked the child if he still persisted in what he had said. "Father," said he, "I have told the truth, and I cannot retract to tell a lie." Trampling under foot every better feeling, the cruel woman again insisted that her husband should continue what she called *his duty*. The blows commenced again with renewed fury, and continued till the poor little fellow fell almost lifeless into the arms of his executioner, to whom he said, throwing his little arms round his neck: "Father, father, I am dying!—I have told the truth!" And he expired. The Court at Madison took cognizance of the affair. The miserable woman was convicted of the crime of which she was accused, her husband was condemned as guilty of murder on the person of his adopted child; finally, the young orphan was proclaimed *the martyr of truth*.—*Recompenses Hebdom.*, No. XLIX., page 24.

III.—ON SLANDER.

364.—*A Sack of Sand.*—If we knew our own faults well, my dear friends, we would take care not to

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speak of those of others, and we would, consequently, never make ourselves guilty of slander. It is related in the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert*, that St. Prior, a hermit of Nitria, was very harsh and severe towards himself, but indulgent and charitable to others. One day, when he was present at an assembly of solitaries in the desert of Scété, adjoining his own, they began to confer together on divers subjects of piety. After a little while, some of the monks came to speak of a grave fault committed by a brother who was not there. St. Prior at first kept silent, but afterwards, perceiving that they still continued to wound charity, he quitted the assembly, took a sack, filled it with sand and laid it on his shoulders. He also took a small basket, put a little sand in the bottom and took it in his hand. It was in this singular state that he again made his appearance amongst the solitaries. You may imagine, children, how eagerly every one asked him what he meant by that. "Alas!" he answered with a sigh, "this sack of sand represents my numberless sins and transgressions, but I take care to carry them behind my back, so as not to see them; this basket, on the contrary, which contains only a little sand, represents the faults of others, which I have before my eyes to judge and condemn them. Would it not be better for me to carry my sins before me to bewail them, and pray to God to forgive them, than to meddle with those of others?" This discourse, so ingenious and so true, touched the solitaries; they not only

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ceased to speak of the faults of others, but agreed that it was only by acting so that salvation could be attained.—Pere Marin, *Vies des Pères des Déserts.*

365. *Inscription in a Dining-Room.*—There are sins that are horrifying in themselves, such as robbery, murder, and drunkenness. Detraction is not of this number, my very dear friends: people give way to it almost without thinking; it seems even that a conversation is dull and insipid, if it be not seasoned with the salt of detraction. Impressed with this conviction, St. Augustine conceived the idea of placing in the dining-room of his episcopal palace, at Hippo, an inscription against detractors. It consisted of two Latin verses, which I do not now remember, and you would not understand them if I did, but their meaning in English was this:

> No admission here for slanderers
> Whose guilty tongue
> Tears the reputation of the absent!
> At this table nought is permitted
> Save innocent discourse.

This inscription was not unnecessary, dear friends, even at the table of a Saint; for, one day, some bishops, whom St. Augustine had invited to dine, forgot themselves a little in the heat of conversation. They dropped, as it were inadvertently, some rather uncharitable words concerning an absent person. Then the holy bishop of Hippo, assuming a serious tone, said, pointing to the Latin inscription: "Beware, brethren, of speaking ill of others, or I shall be

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under the necessity of having those lines effaced." These few words sufficed to put a stop to the detraction, and convinced St. Augustine that he had acted wisely in providing against such contingencies.—POSSIDIUS, *Life of St. Augustine.*

366. *A Sermon in Four Lines.*—Slander is such a vile thing, dear friends, that saints, good Christians, and even men partially educated, cannot endure it. It is related of St. Thomas of Villanova, preacher in ordinary at the Court of the Emperor Charles V., who was also King of Spain, that he could not bear to hear any one spoken ill of in his presence. He was one day waiting in the Emperor's anti-chamber, in the palace of Madrid, and there were there many other persons waiting to be ushered into the royal apartments. To pass the time, these courtiers amused themselves with jesting about an absent person, commenting on his little failings and peculiarities. Indignant at this conduct, St. Thomas of Villanova goes in amongst them, and says with that tone of authority befitting a sacred orator: "Gentlemen, you must either desist from speaking of that person in such a way, or I shall be obliged to withdraw, and you can yourselves inform the Emperor of the cause of my leaving without waiting for an audience." These few words produced all the effect that might have been expected from them; the offenders hung their heads abashed and dared not say another word. Thereupon a nobleman of rank who, in the recess of a window, had seemed to take no notice of what was passing,

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turned round, exclaiming: "Truly, that is what may be called speaking; that sermon is short, but good; it is clear that the preacher is not afraid, even in the palace."—Abbe Dabert, *Vie de St. Thomas de Villeneuve.*

367. *Public Lesson to a Slanderer.*—Slander is not only a great sin, my dear friends, it is also the meanest of vices, for, if you observe, the detractor always takes advantage of the absence of others to make the odious revelation of their faults. I am sorry I do not know the name of a German bishop who, one day, gave a good lesson to a bad tongue of this kind. It was at table; a person whom the prelate had invited to dine with him took the liberty of making some ill-natured remarks concerning an absent person. He unhappily did it neither from ignorance nor from want of thought, for he pretended to excuse himself by saying: "I only speak of this because it is true, I invent nothing." The bishop could not well tell him plainly—"be silent; say no more of that;" but he devised a singular way of making him be silent. "John," said he aloud to one of his servants, "go quick and ask Mr. Such-a-one, who resides at *such a number in such a street*, to come hither; I have something to communicate to him." When the detractor found that the very gentleman of whom he had been speaking so ill was being sent for, he blushed to the very temples, stammered out some words, and asked the bishop if he could not have him brought at another time. "On the con-

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trary," said the prelate calmly but with the slightest possible tinge of irony, "I prefer to have him come just now, when he is being spoken of, so that he may answer for himself; it seems to me that it would not be fair to attack him without furnishing him with the means of defending himself." Never was man more crest-fallen than our unlucky tattler; he asked pardon for having been so indiscreet, and hastened to quit the company he had scandalized by his slanderous discourse.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 434.

368. *The Ill-Tongued Fruiterer.*—You can have no idea, children, of the incalculable mischief that may be caused by a bad tongue, telling everything that the person knows, and inventing what he does not know. The most curious and the most awful story of this kind I ever read is the following, which occurred, I believe, in a province of Austria. A village of about five hundred souls had long enjoyed the most perfect peace and tranquillity. All at once, things changed in a most extraordinary manner; hatred, dissension, and heart-burnings suddenly sprang up in almost every family. Neighbor cursed neighbor; one family was in contention with several others; the very children, animated by the example of their parents, quarrelled amongst themselves and abused each other unmercifully. The venerable pastor of this parish, accustomed to see it edifying and Christian, could not believe his eyes. He long sought to ascertain the cause of a change so sudden-

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and so strange, but no cause could he find. But at last, by observation and continual inquiries, he discovered that all the evil had commenced in the tattling and gossipping of a certain fruit-vender, who had come to reside in the village, and had left it about a year before. In fact, this wretch seemed to have been raised up by the devil to disturb the whole country, so admirably did he play his part. He introduced himself into houses, into families, into companies, heard all that was said, and afterwards went and retailed it underhand to those whom it concerned. "You do not know what was said of you in such a house? I dare not tell you,—it would bring my name in question, and I do not like to meddle with other people's business; if I tell you, mind you do not tell who told you,—if you do, it will ruin me. One could not imagine that people were so wicked. You may be sure I gave no heed to what was said, because I knew you were honest, decent people, but the world believes all that's said. . . . Once more, be sure you do not tell that it was I told you." You may imagine, children, that the more reserve he effected, the more anxious the others were to know what had been said of them. Then the slanderer related things with his usual malice, adding reflections, suppositions, &c., &c. This diabolical system was kept up for several months, now on one side, now on another, so that in a little time the demon of hatred and envy reigned in many hearts. This wretch left the village, but the discord he had sown there did

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not cease at his departure; on the contrary, it passed from neighbor to neighbor, and gained ground from day to day. Things were in this way when the pastor succeeded in finding the clue to this scandalous affair. One Sunday after Vespers, he assembles all the heads of families at his house and addresses them on the existing state of affairs. He begins by reminding them of the sweet tranquillity that reigned amongst them a year or two before; how happy they were then, when the five hundred inhabitants of the village made, as it were, but one family. Then, raising his voice, he asked if they knew whence the change had come. "No one answers," said he; "well! I am going to tell you. It was only an evil spirit who could have done that, and that evil spirit is *such-a-one*, the fruit-seller who lived here some months of the past year." All those present opened their eyes very wide, as yet at a loss to understand the meaning of their pastor's words. He gave them some explanations, questioned them as to the origin of all the trouble, and made them confess that the fruiterer had been the first to spread these reports, whether true or false. They soon saw it all clearly. But that was not all; the priest knew that this wicked man was just in the village that very day; he sent for him. The man never suspected what he was wanted for; on the contrary, he supposed it was a compliment the pastor was paying him, asking him to go and see him. But he was soon undeceived. He had scarcely set foot in the room, when immediately

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all the villagers assailed him with questions: "When was it that you heard me speak ill of my neighbor here?"—"Who told you that I stole hay from Mathurin's barn?"—"Where did you see me quarrelling with my brother-in-law?"—"You may thank the company you are in now, or I would give you what you deserve for telling lies of me to my uncle and cousins." To all these questions, intermingled with threats, and accompanied by vehement gestures, the poor fruit-vender knew not what to answer; he stammered out some excuses and strove to justify himself. They told him to hold his tongue, and began to consider what punishment they should inflict upon him. You should have seen them in their honest indignation; some were for branding him on the face with a red-hot iron; others, for beating him well with sticks; others again, for keeping him in prison all his life. But the pastor soon put a stop to these uncharitable propositions: "My friends," said he, "when there is no one to spread reports, or carry stories, quarrels will soon cease. Follow this advice, for you are not allowed to return evil for evil; one thing only you can do, and that is to expel from amongst you this man who has shown himself unworthy of the hospitality you gave him." It was done accordingly; the fruit-vender quitted the village within twenty-four hours, and took good care, moreover, never to set foot in it again.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 442.

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IV.—ON CALUMNY.

369. *The Book Stolen by its Owner.*—The black venom of calumny never glides into hearts save those that are gnawed by envy; the holiest states are not always sheltered from it. I have read, in the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert*, that St. Paphnucius, a solitary in the desert of Scété, not far from Alexandria, in Egypt, could not escape the shafts of malice. His virtue was so admirable, so perfect, even in his early age, that a solitary, already old, was jealous of it. This was a wicked man, who had nothing of the monk but the habit, and who was tolerated from pure charity. To destroy the reputation of St. Paphnucius, he conceived the following shameful project: One Sunday, whilst the people were going to Mass, this unhappy man introduced himself stealthily into the cell of St. Paphnucius with his prayer-book, which he hid under some mats, heaped in a corner, and went to church with the others, as though he had a very quiet conscience. After Mass, availing himself of the moment when the solitaries were still there, he complained to the Abbot Isidore, who was the priest of that desert, saying that some one had gone into his cell and taken away his book. This accusation threw every one into a stupor of astonishment and indignation, for such things had never been heard of amongst those holy religious. The wretched plotter, profiting by this circumstance, besought St. Isidore to send some

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brothers to make a search in all the cells, and to forbid any one to go out until they returned. Three were chosen, and immediately went to institute the search; they searched every cell, and, of course, found the book in that of St. Paphnucius. Every one was greatly surprised and afflicted at this sad result; it was only the wicked solitary who had the heart to rejoice. As for the saint calumniated, his humility closed his mouth; he allowed himself to be accused, said not a word to justify himself, and accepted the penance imposed upon him. That lasted about fifteen days; but, at the end of that time, God himself took up the defence of His servant in a miraculous manner: He permitted the calumniator to be possessed by the devil. The unhappy man did his best to free himself from the evil spirit, and for that purpose made application to the holiest monks of the desert of Scété; but no one could cure him. That glory was reserved for him whom he had not been ashamed to represent as a robber; yes, dear friends, this calumniator, this envious man came humbly to throw himself at the feet of Paphnucius, and there, in presence of all the solitaries, confessed the infamous means he had employed to ruin his reputation. After this humiliating confession, he besought the Saint to deliver him from the demon, and Paphnucius, returning good for evil, knelt down, and had no difficulty in obtaining from God what he had already merited by his patience and his charity.—Cassian, *Conf.*, XVIII.

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370. *A Saint Dying Under Interdict.*—There are few Saints, my young friends, who have not been the victims of calumny, and that is easily understood. The malice of their enemies being unable to discover anything blameable in their conduct, invented calumnies concerning them and sought to circulate them. One of them who had most to suffer from that kind of persecution was the venerable Jean Baptiste de la Salle, founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, as, I suppose, you are all aware. In 1719, that is to say, the last year of his life, when he lived in retirement at our house at Saint Yon, near Rouen, it was the will of God that he should be once more exposed to contradiction. The pastor of St. Sever, his parish, a virtuous priest animated by the best intentions, but deceived by evil reports and false appearances, conceived a very bad opinion of him. He succeeded in infusing similar suspicions into the mind of a vicar-general of Rouen, who, on his side, far from persuading the archbishop out of his prejudice against the holy founder, sought to envenom him still more. The result of all this calumny was very sad, for the archbishop of Rouen launched a rash interdict against the venerable De la Salle, took from him all the powers he had given him, and forbade him thenceforward to exercise any of them in his diocese. It required a saint to see himself unjustly condemned only a little while before his death, and yet say nothing. But what was the consequence? It was this. The venerable De la Salle

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died on the 7th of April, 1719; well! he had scarcely breathed his last when God permitted that his very enemies, or rather those who had believed the calumnies against him, were the first to proclaim his innocence. The vicar-general, on hearing of his death, exclaimed—"*He was a Saint!—he died a Saint!*" As for M. du Jarrier-Bresnard, the pastor of St. Sever, he was so ashamed of the bad opinion he had of him, that he caused the reparation of it to be inscribed on the public register of his parish, where these words may still be seen: "*He signalized and rendered himself commendable by the practice of every Christian virtue.*"—Abbé Blin, *Vie de M. de la Salle*, II., 167.

371. *Story of a Singular Ghost.*—Of all calumnies disguised under false appearances of which there is any record, few have struck me so much as this one, from which you will see, children, that if God sometimes permits the calumniator to be believed, He never suffers his crime to go unpunished. A farmer of Southam, in Warwickshire, England, was murdered on his way home. On the following day, a man came to the farmer's wife, and asked if her husband had got home the evening before. "Alas! no," she replied, "and I assure you I am very uneasy about him." "Your uneasiness, madam, can scarcely equal mine, and for this reason: Last night, as I lay awake in my bed, your husband appeared to me; he showed me several wounds he had received on his body, and told me positively that he had been murdered by *such-a-one*, and that his body had been

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thrown into a marl-pit situate at a certain place on the road." The woman, terribly alarmed by this sad disclosure, caused a search to be made. The marl-pit was discovered, and in it was found the dead body, bearing wounds in the places which had been pointed out. The person whom the ghost had accused was seized and delivered up to justice, as being strongly suspected of the murder. His trial took place in Warwick, and the jurors would have condemned him as rashly as the magistrate had ordered his arrest, if Lord Raymond, the principal judge, had not suspended the warrant. Addressing himself then to the jurors, he said: "I think, gentlemen, you appear to give more weight to the testimony of a ghost than it deserves. I cannot say that I put much faith in such stories; but, however that may be, we have no right to follow our own inclinations in this matter. We form a court of justice, and must act according to law; now, I know of no law that admits, in justice, the testimony of a ghost. And even if there were any such, it seems to me only fit and proper that the ghost should appear here to make his deposition himself. Crier, call the accusing ghost." The crier called three different times, without the ghost appearing, as you may well suppose. "Gentlemen of the jury," continued the judge, "the prisoner at the bar is proved to be of unblemished reputation; it has not appeared, in the course of the trial, that there was any sort of quarrel between him and the deceased. I believe him innocent. As there is no proof against

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him, either direct or indirect, it seems to me that he ought to be discharged. On the other side, from several circumstances that struck me during the trial, I strongly suspect the person who says he saw the ghost of being himself the murderer; hence it was not difficult for him to point out the position of the wounds, the marl-pit into which the body was thrown, &c. In consequence of these suspicions, I think it my duty to have him arrested, until further investigation takes place. Police, arrest *such-a-one !*" Hearing this address, so wise and so energetic, every one agreed that Lord Raymond was right. The accuser became the accused; a search was made in his house, where several articles were found belonging to the deceased. Finally, he himself confessed his crime, and was sentenced to death at the next assizes.—Filassier, *Dict. d'Educ.*, II., 158.

372. *The Blind Man of Nanterre.*—Speaking of calumny, my dear friends, allow me to tell you a circumstance that occurred some years before the Revolution. There was in Nanterre,—a large village, the birthplace of St. Genevieve, a short distance from Paris,—a poor blind man who was asking charity in the public square before the church. He had the misfortune, I know not well how, to displease a wicked woman who was engaged in business, that brought her once or twice a week from St. Germain to Paris. She vowed vengeance against the poor man. And for more than six months, she had the persevering wickedness to say, every place she went,

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that this blind man was unworthy of public pity. "If you knew how matters stand with him," said she, "only fancy,—that man has a whole bag of silver that fell from a stage, and by his begging he has actually become so rich that he owns a great portion of the rich plains around Nanterre; consequently, he takes from the real poor the alms that belong to them, and of which they have more need than he has." Little by little this absurd calumny spread abroad, and was believed. When the poor blind man approached stages or carriages he was shamefully driven away with harsh, cruel words. Then no more alms for the unfortunate man; for almost three months he scarcely received a farthing; he was reduced, therefore, to the greatest destitution, together with his wife who was sick in bed and four young children. Meanwhile the Mayor of Nanterre, who knew that this poor man did not own a foot of ground, was touched with his misfortune. He took the trouble of having notices posted up in various places, warning all persons passing through Nanterre that the stories told of the poor man were exposing himself and his family to die of hunger; that there was not a word of truth in what was said of him, and that it all came from the malice of a dealing woman from St. Germain-en-Laye, who came to Nanterre three or four times a week, &c. It took some time, my friends, to counteract the sad effects of this calumny; but finally the truth prevailed, and the poor blind man became again the object of pub-

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lic charity as before.—Filassier, *Dict. d'Educ.*, II., 122.

373. *The Poor Girl Justified.*—Nothing is easier than to make use of the dangerous weapon called calumny to wound one's neighbor; but, my friends, it is not so easy to repair the wrong when done. In a village of Prussia, the name of which I do not know, a very pious young person, known by the name of Matilda, was obliged to earn her living by going out to work by the day either at washing or sewing, or whatever she could get to do. Her virtue excited the envy of a person of her own age, who was inspired by the devil to ruin her reputation by calumnies the most atrocious. So persistently was this carried on that very soon the poor girl could obtain no more work; no one would even allow her into their house, and she was forced, at last, to beg her bread from door to door. All this took place in 1846. The following year there was a special jubilee, on the occasion of the accession of Pius IX. to the pontifical throne. It was preached with so much zeal in the village of which I have spoken to you, dear friends, that the calumniator entered into herself and wished to repair, as far as possible, the evil she had done. One day the mayor of the village enters the cottage of the poor workwoman, then reduced to beggary, and says to her: "Matilda, I am commissioned to repair the crying injustice that has been committed in your regard. You are a worthy girl, you have piety and virtue, but an envious

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neighbor of yours has spread reports very dangerous to you, and which it was wrong for us to believe. Come with me!" Matilda only half understanding what was meant, followed the mayor to the square in front of the church. What was her surprise to find there nearly all the inhabitants of the village, apparently waiting for her. On her approach they all clapped their hands, crying out, "Poor girl! who could have the heart to belie her as they did? Who could have believed anything bad of her?" The mayor conducted the young girl, more and more astonished, to the church door, and showed her in the glass box, where notices are usually posted, a letter written in large characters. It contained these words, which explained the whole mystery:

"I, the undersigned, declare, by this present writing, that all I said in the village concerning the unhappy Matilda was a pure calumny, and had no foundation whatever. I retract it completely, and ask pardon for it of God and of all the inhabitants of this village. Signed,

"ANNE GEISEL."

This public and solemn reparation produced the desired effect, as every one was then anxious to employ a person so trustworthy and so deserving of respect.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. His.*, III., 194.

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V.—ON RASH JUDGMENT.

374.—*The Viper that Bit St. Paul.*—Here is another example of rash, unfounded judgment. Thousands of them might easily be found, my very dear friends, in the history of human errors. The following I take from the Acts of the Apostles, written by the Evangelist St. Luke. The Apostle St. Paul, accused by the hardened Jews, demanded to be taken before the Emperor Nero himself, who was then at the head of the Roman Empire. On his voyage to Rome, the vessel was shipwrecked and went ashore on the coast of the island of Malta, which belonged to the Romans. Every one on board was so wet and cold that their first care was to make a great fire. St. Paul himself took up an armful of sticks and threw them on the fire. A viper coming out of the heat fastened on his hand. The inhabitants of the island, assembled in large numbers around the strangers, seeing the viper hanging from St. Paul's hand, said amongst themselves: "See, that man must be a murderer; he has escaped shipwreck, but divine justice pursues him; he is going to die before our eyes" St. Paul, not at all disturbed by this accident, contented himself with shaking off the viper into the fire, where it was burned; as to him, his arm did not swell, and no harm was done him. The barbarians, expecting to see him drop down dead, completely changed their minds concerning him; they had taken him for a criminal, but they ended by believing him a god.—*Acts of the Apostles*, Chap. XXVIII.

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375. *A Saint's Three Rash Judgments.*—I think I have remarked, my young friends, that you are fond of hearing of the little trials and weaknesses of saints; doubtless, because you say to yourselves: "One may, then, become a saint, even with imperfections." Well! yes, my friends, and it is for that reason that I am going to tell you of the Abbot Maquette's three sins. He was a pious solitary who lived in Egypt, I think in the fourth century. During the first years of his solitary life he was guilty of three rash judgments. The first was having accused some of the brethren of impatience and immortification, because they had had recourse to physicians for tumors that came in their mouth. The second, having blamed others for making use of goat skin covers to sleep on or under instead of sleeping on the bare ground. The third was, having taxed some religious with vanity because they had blessed oil asked of them by pious persons who came to see them. "To punish me for these sins," said the humble solitary, "God permitted that I should fall into the same faults. In fact, having an abscess in my mouth, I suffered so much that my superior ordered me to consult the doctor; the same ailment obliged me to sleep under a cover; and, finally, some persons urged me so much that in order to get rid of them I gave them a phial of oil which I had blessed. So it was that I learned how wrong I was in judging and condemning my brethren.—Rodriguez, *Christ. Perf.*, I., 446.

376. *Judge not and you shall not be judged*—You,

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doubtless, remember, my good friends, those words of Our Lord: "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged." I remember a story relating to that. Anastatius, abbot of the celebrated monastery of St. Catherine, situate on Mount Sinaï, relates it himself of one of his monks, who lived about the year 680. This monk appeared to be somewhat irregular in his conduct, for he often dispensed with the exercises of the community, so that he was in low repute amongst the brethren. He fell ill, and Abbot Anastatius went to see him. He expected to find him sad and penitent, on account of his disedifying life; but he was much surprised to see him gay and tranquil as saints are wont to be at the hour of their death. He was so scandalized at this that he could not help reproaching him with it: "How! brother, you who have led such an irregular life, do not tremble in the hour of death, at the moment when you are going to render an account of your life to the Supreme Judge." "Excuse me, father, I am very easy on the score of my salvation, because God has deigned to send an angel to assure me of it. Although it is true that I took things easy, and often dispensed with the exercises of the community, either on account of my health, or even from tepidity, I bore patiently all the annoyances and all the reproaches to which I was subjected in consequence thereof; I heartily forgave all that, and I always put the best construction on what I saw others do; so that as I never judged others, I hope not to be judged myself."—"Well, my dear brother,

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since that is the case, you may die in peace." And so, my friends, the monk died loaded with consolations, and with every mark of predestination. Let us, then, never judge others, and we shall not be judged ourselves.—RODRIGUEZ, *Christ. Perf.*, I., 447.

377. *The Suspicions of Louis the Severe.*—How many persons have had to repent of believing too readily either their own rash suspicions, or the hasty accusations of others! A duke of Bavaria, Louis the Severe, who lived in the thirteenth century, had a hard experience in this way. He was in one of the provinces bordering on the Rhine, when he received by chance from his wife, Mary of Brabant, a letter that was not intended for him. The duchess had written two letters on the same day, both dated from the castle of Donauwœrth; one was meant for her husband, and the other for one of his officers, named Henry Rucho. Unhappily she made a mistake in directing them, and the duke received the letter intended for the officer. As it contained some kind and cordial expressions, he instantly supposed that his wife had betrayed him. A gloomy jealousy then takes possession of his soul, he hastens to Donauwœrth, enters the castle in a rage, knocks the sentinel down, kills a person he met on his way, flings the duchess' first waiting-woman from the top of a tower throws the duchess into prison, and, next day, regardless of either pity, or justice, or the earnest protestations of his wife, he has her beheaded. This was in the year 1255 or 1256. The unhappy man failed not

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to discover that his wife was innocent, but the discovery came, alas! too late. He was so grieved thereby that his hair became suddenly white in the space of a single night. Such was the chain of crimes and misfortunes that resulted from a rash suspicion and a hasty judgment.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 341.

378. *The Ring and the Loaf of Bread.*—One of the sins most easily committed, my young friends, is that of judging everything we see, and putting always the worst construction on it. And yet how often are we mistaken, even when appearances seem the most evident. Listen to this anecdote. A woman of the middle class of townspeople had placed on a table a gold ring which, an hour after, had disappeared. Her suspicions immediately fell upon a young student, because he was the only one who had entered the house. He was carefully searched but nothing was seen of the ring. Nevertheless, he was still suspected. Next day, at dinner-time, a loaf of bread was laid on the table, and several slices were cut from it, as usual. All at once, behold the ring falls on the table. It was easily understood that the woman who had placed her ring there on the previous evening, had laid the loaf on it soon after, without paying any attention, and the ring had sunk into the bread still fresh and soft. A singular circumstance, my friends, and an additional proof how careful we ought to be in giving way to this evil tendency, common as it is, to suspect others on the slightest occasion.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 442.

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CHAPTER X.

NINTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

379. *A Twenty Years' Torment.*—When you happen, my dear friends, to be tempted by the devil, when he seeks to inspire you with bad thoughts, not only must you avoid dwelling upon it, but you must even mention it to your confessor the first opportunity you have of doing so: nothing annoys the devil more than that. The celebrated Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris in the fourteenth century, relates that a poor solitary was tormented in this way long and violently, but without daring to acquaint his director of his trouble. "I am lost!" said he to himself; "it is frightful to have such bad thoughts; if I tell my spiritual father he will be scandalized, and will have a very bad opinion of me." Nevertheless, after having borne these interior torments for full twenty years, he resolved to speak of them to an old Father of the desert, in whom he had great confidence; he dared not even tell him by word of mouth, and wrote what he had to say on a piece of papyrus. The holy old man, having read it, began to smile and said to

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him: "My son, place your hand on my head, (and the solitary having done so,) I take your sin upon myself, so trouble yourself no more about it."—"How, Father?" asked the solitary, much surprised at these words, "it seems to me that I have already one foot in hell, and you tell me not to trouble myself about it."—"But, son," said the old man, "do you take pleasure in these thoughts?"—"On the contrary, Father, they have always given me great sorrow and much pain."—"That being the case," replied the man of God, "it is a proof that you did not consent to them, and that it was the devil who excited them in you in order to make you despair. Therefore, son, take my advice, and if any such thoughts again recur to you, say to the devil, who is the author of them: 'Woe to you, spirit of pride and impurity; on your head be your abominations and your blasphemies! I will have nothing to do with you; I hold to what the Church believes, and I would die a thousand times rather than offend God.'" These words of the holy old man so consoled and strengthened the solitary, that he was never again attacked by the thoughts that had so long tormented him.—RODRIGUEZ, *Christ. Perf.*, IV., 88.

380. *The Two Tempting Devils.*—The devil may well suggest bad thoughts to us, my dear friends, but he cannot make us consent to them. The Abbé Smaragde relates a circumstance in this connection which may be useful, although it is not very authentic. He says that a monk had a vision one day. It seemed

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to him that he saw two demons speaking together, and asking each other concerning the progress they were respectively making with two persons whom they had been trying to tempt. One said: "I am doing very well with him that I have to deal with; I have only to present a bad thought to him, and immediately he takes to it and dwells upon it; when he finds himself surprised by that thought, he turns over in his mind all the ground it has gained there; he amuses himself with examining how far he dwelt upon it, whether it was his own fault, whether he resisted, or consented, how it could have come into his mind, if he gave occasion to it, or if he did all that he ought to have done to give none; in short, as often as I please, I torture his mind in this way, and put him almost beside himself." "For me," said the other demon, "I am losing time with him that I am tempting. As soon as I suggest a bad thought to him, he immediately has recourse to God, or the Blessed Virgin, or some Saint, or else he turns his mind to something else; so, I know not where to take him." By this you may see, my friends, that the devil is very glad when we amuse ourselves reasoning on a bad temptation which he has suggested to us; for, then, he lacks neither will, nor address to make it pass from our mind to our heart. On the contrary, a good way to resist it is, not even to want to listen to it, and not to make head against it, but immediately to turn the mind away from it, without paying any attention to it. Act in this way, then,

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dear friends, since it is the only way of remaining victorious.—Rodriguez, *Chris. Perf.*, IV., 95.

381. *St. Benedict Rolling Himself in Thorns.*—The holy virtue of modesty is so precious that it is called the virtue of angels; hence some of the saints were seen to do extraordinary things in order to preserve it pure and untouched. Of this number was St. Benedict, patriarch of the Monks of the West. When he was only sixteen years of age, he quitted the world, and retired to a small desert, named Sublac, situated within a short distance of Rome. There he shut himself up in a cave and lived three years in absolute solitude and in extraordinary austerities. Well! my friends, notwithstanding all these precautions, the devil still found means to tempt him against the Sixth Commandment, recalling to his mind the remembrance of certain things he had seen in his early youth. The holy young man resisted this evil temptation with all the energy of which he was capable; but, seeing that it still continued to torment him, he took a most extraordinary resolution in order to drive it away: he availed himself of the darkness of night to lie down on thorns and briars, and to roll himself thereon so long as the temptation continued. He was well rewarded for his generous resolution, for not only did these vile thoughts quit him entirely, but God gave him the grace never to have any more all the rest of his life. It was he himself who confessed it to his disciples, in his latter years, and we have

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these details from St. Gregory the Great.—St. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, Chapter II.

382. *How a Temptation is Put to Flight.*—Those who are cowardly and pusillanimous succeed in nothing; we must arm ourselves with courage and resolution if we would surmount the obstacles opposed to our salvation. Hence it was said by Job, my young friends, that *the life of man upon earth is a warfare.* I have read, in the life of St. Thomas Aquinas, one of the most learned doctors of the Church, a fact that goes to prove what I say. From his earliest years, and especially at the period of his first communion, he formed the project of entering the Order of St. Dominic. His brothers, instead of admiring his resolution and encouraging him in it, regarded it as a sort of dishonor for them, and sought by every possible means to dissuade him from it. They went so far as to shut him up in a tower of the castle of Rocca-Sicca, in the diocese of Acquinas, in the kingdom of Naples, and to impose upon him the hardest privations in order to conquer his resolution. But as all that did not succeed, they allowed themselves to be inspired by the spirit of evil, and openly attacked the virtue of St. Thomas Aquinas. They promised a great sum of money to a wicked woman, if she succeeded in seducing and overcoming him. This unhappy woman presents herself before him and dares to address him in the language of unbridled passion. The young champion understood that, in a combat of open force, like that, it would be but losing time

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to attempt reasoning. What does he do? He takes a burning coal from the hearth, and begins to pursue the woman, crying: "Robbers! robbers!" You should have seen how she went down stairs, four steps at a time, and how quickly she disappeared from the castle! That was all St. Thomas wanted. When his brothers saw that their wicked persecutions, instead of subduing, did but strengthen him in his generous resolution, they let him alone, and he entered, as I told you, the Order of Dominicans, rendered illustrious by so many holy doctors.—*Life of St. Thomas Aquinas.*

383. *A Tempted Man's Reliquaire.*—I am sure you all wear on your necks, my young friends, either a scapular, a cross, or a blessed medal. These pious objects, when they are worn with faith and with respect, draw down graces upon us and help us to practise virtue. I have read a charming story of that kind, which is related by Cesaire, a writer of the Middle Ages. He had it from the very person to whom the circumstance occurred, and who was a monk of the Order of Citeaux, named Bernard. This man, whilst still very young, going alone one day on a journey, was assailed by some bad thoughts. As he did not take much care then, because he was still young in the world, he made no great efforts to drive them away or resist the temptation. It happened, however, that a little reliquaire, which he was accustomed to wear hanging from his neck, and in which there were relics of St. John and St. Paul,

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began to tap him gently on the chest. At first Bernard could not make out what this meant, or it might be that he paid no attention to it, and he continued to occupy himself with the same thoughts, till meeting a drove of oxen, his mind was diverted from them; then the strokes of the reliquaire ceased entirely. A little while after, the temptation having attacked him again, the holy relics likewise commenced tapping him, as if warning him to drive away those bad thoughts very quickly. It was then that he understood the meaning of the taps they so frequently gave him, and, with God's grace, he courageously surmounted the temptation, and took care not to dwell on evil thoughts again.—RODRIGUEZ, *Chris. Perf.*, II., 27.

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CHAPTER XI.

TENTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

Thou Shalt not Covet Thy Neighbor's Goods.

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384. *The Wishes of an Envious Man and a Covetous Man.*—It is not forbidden to desire health, honors, or riches, provided they are only acquired by good means and with good motives; but that is not what the envious do. At the court of a king of Sicily, whose name I forget, lived two officers, one of whom was envious, and the other avaricious. Both were known to the court as such. The prince wished to divert himself one day at the expense of their passions, to make them better understand how odious they were. He had them brought before him, and after praising their merit, declared that he had made up his mind to reward them, by giving them whatsoever they wished. "Nevertheless," added he, "I would have you remark that he who first prefers his request shall receive but once what he desires, whilst the second shall obtain double that much. The two soldiers remained a long while silent.

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Neither wished to speak first. The covetous man said to himself: "If I speak first, I shall receive less than the other, for then he shall get twice as much as I." The envious man, on his side, thought within himself: "I could not endure that this man should be more richly rewarded than I. I would rather get nothing than be the cause, by my own fault, of his obtaining double as much as I do." As the prince had already waited a considerable time for their answer, he decided that the envious man should be the first to express his wish. It was a hard thing, a very hard thing. "What favor can I ask?" said he to himself; "what means can I devise to prevent this greedy man, whom I detest, from obtaining more than I shall? If I ask a horse, he will ask two; if I wish for a house, he will likewise wish for two; and I could never endure that, no, never! I prefer to ask for a punishment, so that he may be obliged to undergo twice what I do." After giving way thus far to his odious passion, he spoke as follows: "Prince, I would have one of my eyes scooped out, and this other man's two." At these words, every one present burst out laughing; they all jeered and scoffed at the envious officer, who was thus entrapped into such a revelation of the shameful passion that was gnawing at his heart.—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 337.

285. *The Masks at the Wedding.*—When envy takes possession of a heart, there are no crimes of which it is not capable; but what especially irritates

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the envious is the advantages enjoyed by others. In 1643, in a town of Germany, a young man of distinction was celebrating his marriage with a young lady, whose hand had been sought by a number of unsuccessful suitors. The rabid jealousy of these young men manifested itself by a signal instance of revenge. All at once, during the evening, an immense number of masks were seen to enter the banquetting-hall. The first thought which occurred to the guests was that they meant, by an agreeable surprise, to contribute to the gayety of the wedding; accordingly, their whole trouble was to make way for the new-comers, so that they might play their parts in a suitable manner. Some of the masks then made a sign to the bridegroom to follow them into an adjoining room, which he did. A few minutes after, they returned bearing a coffin magnificently adorned and covered with black cloth, which they set down in the middle of the hall; then they began to dance about, singing lively popular airs. Insensibly they moved towards the door, and departed, as it were, unnoticed. The general attention was fixed on this strange scene, the upshot of which every one impatiently expected. They all hoped that the masks would soon return to the hall, and that something very amusing would come of the affair. They waited, therefore, but waited in vain, for the masks did not return. They sought them everywhere about the house; they had disappeared. In the uncertainty in which every one was, it occurred to one of the guests that in the

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coffin might be concealed a magnificent wedding gift, the donors of which chose to remain unknown. Immediately the pall was raised; but, oh, horror! instead of a wedding present was found,—would you believe it, dear friends? the corpse of the bridegroom who had been strangled by these envious wretches disguised and masked. The murderers were brought to justice, but the deed they perpetrated is a standing proof that envy may lead to the greatest crimes. —SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 334.

386. *A Man that Wishes for Nothing.*—It is good philosophy, my friends, to know how to be content with little, and to desire nothing: then one leaves the earth without trouble, and finds enjoyment where others see only torments. Listen. At a time when a purple fever was making sad havoc amongst the poor who had not had time to be removed to the Hotel Dieu, the community of priests of St. Marcel, in Paris, being unable to suffice for exhorting the dying, asked the assistance of the Capuchin friars. One of these, a most venerable man, commenced his visits of charity with a low stable, where a victim of the contagion lay suffering. What does he see on going in? A dying old man, stretched on some filthy rags. He was alone; a bundle of hay served him as a bed; no seat, no furniture; he had sold all, during the first days of his illness, to obtain a little broth. On the black, bare walls hung an axe and two saws; that was all he had, that and his arms, when he could move them; but then he had not

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strength to lift them up. "Take courage, my friend," said the Capuchin going in; "God is dealing mercifully with you; He is going to take you out of this world, where you have had nothing but troubles."—"Nothing but troubles!" repeated the dying man in a feeble voice; "you are mistaken, Father, I lived contented enough, and never complained of my lot. I never knew either hatred or envy; my sleep was calm; I worked all day, but I slept soundly all night. The tools you see there procured me my daily bread which I eat with a thankful heart, and never envied those whose tables were better served. I saw the rich more subject to disease than others. I was poor, but until now I got good health. If I recover my health, which I do not expect, I will go back to the wood-yard, and continue to bless the hand of God, who has hitherto taken care of me." The confessor, much surprised, knew not how to talk to such a penitent. He could not reconcile the sight of his wretched pallet with language so content. He composed himself, however, and said to him: "My son, although this life has not been wearisome to you, you must, nevertheless, make up your mind to quit it; for you must submit to the will of God."—"Undoubtedly," replied the dying man calmly and firmly; "every one must pass away when their turn comes; I knew how to live, and I know how to die; I thank God for having given me life, and for making me pass by death to Him. But, I believe the moment is come; yes, I feel it—Farewell, Father!"—

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He had barely time to say these few words, when he tranquilly yielded up his soul into the hands of his Creator.—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 266.

387. *Death Caused by Envious Desires.*—To a person actuated by envy, dear friends, the sight of the prosperity of others is the greatest torment that can be imagined. Oh! how many troubles should we avoid, did we only know how to moderate our desires and rejoice at the prosperity of our neighbors. Allow me to tell you the sad story of an envious person. It was a Prussian, who lived at the beginning of this century, on the banks of the Rhine. He had a fine fortune, and was the owner of numerous cattle; but, notwithstanding all this, he was no less jealous of what was possessed by others. In the evening, when the cattle were returning from the pasture, he was accustomed to place himself before the door of his house, to watch the flocks going home from the fields; whenever he saw a finer cow than any of his passing by, he was as vexed as could be, saying: *Ah! I have no cow like that?* If, in the spring, he saw his neighbors' farms presenting the appearance of a fine harvest, he said sorrowfully to himself: *See! everything prospers with others, whilst nothing succeeds with me!* Thus he had the unhappy art of tormenting himself. And what was the result, my friends? After dragging out for some time a sickly, miserable life, he was seized with a violent bilious fever, and died just two days after receiving a legacy of two hundred

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thousand francs, left him by one of his relatives. Let us beware then of giving way to that spirit of envy and cupidity, that would be enough to embitter our whole life.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 336.

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CHAPTER XII.

FIRST COMMANDMENT OF THE CHURCH.

388. *Profaners of Holydays do the Devil's Work.*— Is it not a deplorable thing, my good friends, to see how lightly the festivals commanded by the Church are sometimes profaned? It often happens that God punishes even in this life those who are guilty of this sin, so grievous to His heart. St. Etienne, Bishop of Die, visiting one of the villages of his diocese, on the patronal feast of the parish, which had attracted thither a multitude of people from all the country round, perceived that devotion was not the principal motive of this gathering. Then he employed prayers and remonstrances to turn them from debauchery public dances and profane sports; but it was all of no use. The insolence of this unbelieving people animated the zeal of the holy prelate; making an extraordinary use of his episcopal authority and full of confidence in God, he commanded the devils who were exciting these evil doings to become visible to the eyes of those who were committing them. Scarcely had he made this injunction in the name of

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Almighty God, when those infernal spirits appeared mingling with the gamblers, the dancers, and those who were giving themselves up to the excesses of the table. They had faces so frightful, they belched forth so much fire, that those poor people, more dead than alive, began to cry "Mercy! mercy!" turning their suppliant eyes on their holy bishop. St. Etienne, touched by their repentance, had only to say one word and all those hideous spectres disappeared; he profited by the occasion to represent to his rebellious flock the enormity of their fault, and to exhort them to repair it by penance. Although we may not see the devil every time we thus do wrong, my dear friends, yet we cannot doubt but he is there, and rejoices in our unhappy willingness to hear him. NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, VI., 38.

389. *The Man with the Crooked Neck.*—In former times, my friends, the patronal feast of each parish was not postponed till the following Sunday, as it is now; it was celebrated on the very day it fell on in the week. It was, of course, a feast of obligation, so that, on that day, all labor was suspended. St. Gregory of Tours relates the following story of a man who was punished by God for having worked on a holyday of this kind. St. Avit, an abbot of the diocese of Chartres, who lived in the sixth century, having died on the very day he had foretold by revalation, was honorably interred in the city of Orleans. The Christians built a church over his tomb, and his festival was celebrated every year with great pomp

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on the very day of his death, which was the 17th of June. But, some years after, it happened that, on that day, a certain man of the same city of Orleans, despising the precept of the Church, took his spade and went to work in his vineyard, whilst others went to church to assist at the office celebrated in honor of the Saint. Several persons even having rebuked him for not keeping the festival as he ought, he would not turn back, and contented himself with saying jestingly: "Was not he that you honor an artisan and a a laborer like myself?" But he had scarcely set foot in his vineyard, and raised the earth with his spade, when his neck being twisted round, his face was immediately turned the opposite way. Then, seized with fright, he came, weeping to the church of the holy abbot, asking pardon for the profanation he had committed. You may judge, dear friends, the effect produced by the sight of that poor deformed man. However, his repentance was so sincere, and his prayers so fervent, that he was cured some days after, his neck returned to its natural position, and he might thank the Saint who had wrought this double miracle. —St. Gregory of Tours, *Gloire des Confesseurs*, Ch. 99.

390. *Sermon of a Judge.*—Nothing so brutalizes a workman, a tradesman, or any man whatever, children, as the profanation of days consecrated to the Lord. Take away the sanctification of Sundays and holydays, and the laborer is nothing more than a working machine, or a toiling beast of burden. It requires no great reasoning to demonstrate this. An

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English judge named Holt, a just and upright man as it was possible to meet, had the misfortune, during his youth, to form bad connections, which inspired him with a contempt for religion, so that he turned into derision the sanctification of Sundays and festivals, spending those days in the very worst company. Happily for him, he was withdrawn by circumstances from these evil courses; by degrees he became more regular in his life, and failed not to recover the esteem of his fellow-townsmen. He was invested with the dignity of judge. One day, whilst discharging the duties of his office, he was forced to pass sentence of death on a man whom he recognized as one of his former associates. The sight of this criminal impressed him strongly and made him reflect on the danger to which he had exposed himself, by leading a life similar to his. He could not help asking the wretch what had become of the other companions of their youth. "Alas!" answered the criminal, "there is not one of them alive, except you and myself; some fell under the sword of justice, others died a violent death." The judge, unable longer to repress his emotion, sighed deeply and addressed to those present a touching and most edifying discourse, to show them that the profanation of the Lord's Day makes man a wild beast, deprived of any noble or generous feeling, and with nothing to restrain him from plunging into the lowest depths of turpitude and vice. I know not whether his discourse made any impression on the hearers, children, but let us, at

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least, turn it to account for ourselves.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 210.

391. *Pass That to Your Neighbor.*—Regarding the sanctification of festivals, I will tell you a rather amusing anecdote which I read in the *Magazin Pittoresque.* The Duke of Brunswick, Charles William, who lived some threescore years ago, very properly attached great importance to the religious observance of Sundays and holydays. One day, he learns that some villagers had the bad habit of assembling at the time of divine service, in a tavern, and spending in drinking all the time they should have passed hearing Mass and instructions, or assisting at Vespers. The exhortations of the priests, even the remonstrances of the magistrates, had not been able to break these topers off their evil habit. The duke, attired in a coarse overcoat, buttoned up to the chin, repairs one Sunday to the inn pointed out to him. Just as the bell was calling the faithful to church, arrives the troop of tipplers, preceded by a large heavy personage who, by his rubicund nose and flaming red face, might easily be recognized as the president of the jolly band. He sits down at the upper end of the table, and without a word said, places the duke beside him, not, however, without throwing a look of distrust on this guest, whom no one remembered having seen there before. Meanwhile the innkeeper sets before the president an enormous pitcher of brandy. The latter takes it in his two hands, swallows a good draught and gives it to the duke, saying: "Pass that

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to your neighbor?" The pitcher thus makes the circuit of the table, then returns to the president, who, after having given it a cordial embrace, puts it again into circulation. Each guest lays hold of it in turn with right good will, and hands it to the next, saying: "Pass that to your neighbor." At the third round of the blessed pitcher, the duke rises in a fury, and, unbuttoning his overcoat, so as to let all present see his well-known uniform and the insignia of royalty, then strikes the president with all his might, saying: "Pass that to your neighbor!" As the latter hesitated, the duke seizes his sword and cries out so loud that no one could possibly be mistaken: "Let any of you that strikes too light or too slowly beware of me, for I will make an example of him!" At these words, every arm rises, blows fall like rain from one end of the table to the other, five or six times in succession, till at length the duke, satisfied with the punishment he had inflicted on this incorrigible set of topers, leaves them to themselves and retires to his palace. They say, and I can easily believe it, that on the following Sunday, not one of them was tempted to go to the tavern; on the contrary, they were amongst the first to go to church both at Mass and Vespers.—*Magazin Pittoresque*, year 1844, p. 208.

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CHAPTER XIII.

SECOND COMMANDMENT OF THE CHURCH.

I.—ON THE PARISH MASS.

392. *The Huntsmen Surprised by a Storm.*—The Church is a good mother, my friends; she does not disapprove of our taking salutary rest and moderate recreation on Sundays and holydays; but it must never be at the expense of offices of obligation. St. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence, relates the following story on that subject: Two young men had made arrangements to go hunting on a festival day; only one of them had taken care to hear Mass before setting out. They were scarcely an hour out, when all of a sudden the sky grew dark, a fearful storm came on, accompanied with such terrific thunder and lightning, that it seemed as though it were the end of the world. What frightened them most was, that amid that tremendous noise, they heard at intervals a voice of thunder, crying: *Strike! strike!* Meanwhile, the air becoming somewhat clearer, they began to recover from their fright and pursued their way; suddenly the thunder pealed again with great fury,

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and killed the one of the two huntsmen who had not heard Mass that morning. The other, terror-struck and quite beside himself, knew not whether to go on or turn back; whilst he was in this trouble and uncertainty, he heard again the same voice crying: *Strike! strike the other, too!* He was ready to sink with terror, when another voice was heard saying these consoling words: "I cannot strike this one, because he heard this morning the *Verbum caro factum est.*" You understand, dear children, that, by these words, which are the last of the Gospel of St. John, read at the end of the Mass, the celestial voice meant to say that the huntsman had assisted at Mass. A good lesson, by which we shall try to profit, at need.—RODRIGUEZ, *Prac. Chris. Perf.*, IV., 354.

393. *Dumont's Royal Mass.*—When one has had, like you, my friends, the happiness of being brought up Christianly, they find an inexpressible charm in the offices of the Church, which are so full, at once, of majesty and simplicity. The celebrated Cardinal de Cheverus, who was missionary in the United States, first Bishop of Boston, and afterwards Bishop of Montauban and Archbishop of Bordeaux, relates a thing that happened to himself. After having visited the Catholics of his mission, he repaired to the district of Penobscot and Passamaquoddy, inhabited by a multitude of savages, wandering here and there in the woods, without any fixed habitation, and spending all their time in hunting and fishing. Accompanied by

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a guide, he had journeyed for several days through a dark forest, when, on a Sunday morning, a great number of voices, singing in unison, was heard in the distance. M. de Cheverus stops a moment to listen, and, to his great astonishment, he distinguishes a hymn well known to him. He searches his memory for the strain, and soon perceives that those wandering children of the forest are executing Dumont's Royal Mass, which resounds through the churches and cathedrals of France on days of great solemnity. The scene was to him both touching and sublime; for what could be more touching than to see a savage people, who were fifty years without a priest, remaining faithful to the celebration of the Lord's Day! And then, what more sublime than those sacred songs, directed by piety alone, and resounding far off through the depths of a vast primeval forest! Cardinal de Cheverus was wont to say that he had never found anything so touching in his whole career as a priest and a missionary.—HAMON, *Vie du Cardinal de Cheverus.*

394. *Napoleon at the Midnight Mass.*—It were better, my friends, not to go to Mass than to behave there in a scandalous manner. By not going to Mass, you commit a grievous sin; but, by behaving badly at Mass, you commit two: one, by not fulfilling the precept, the other, by the scandal given. It was in the first years of the Empire; on Christmas Eve, a lieutenant-general had some officers of rank and a marshal of France to dine with him. Dinner

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being over, some one asks how they are to pass the rest of the evening. One of the guests answers carelessly: 'Suppose we go to Midnight Mass."—"So be it!" reply the others. They enter the church of St. Roch. You may form an idea of the devotion of these officers, who went to church after a convivial dinner, merely by way of curiosity and pastime. Looking around, laughing, talking was all they did. But all at once appears a little man, wrapt in a large cloak. He resolutely approaches the merry group and says in a quick, authoritative tone: "Gentlemen, you are acting badly, very badly. When you come to church you ought to comport yourselves with propriety. Respect and silence, gentlemen!" He said no more. That little man in the gray cloak was the Emperor Napoleon himself, who had come to assist at the Midnight Mass. You may imagine the astonishment of our officers when they had recognized him. It is unnecessary to add that during the remainder of the divine office not one of them so much as turned his head. These poor Christians did through fear of Napoleon what they ought to have done through love of God and the Infant Jesus.—*Daily Rewards*, No. XXXV., 25.

395. *Four Hours' Journey to go to Mass.*—You may already have heard the proverb: "The nearer the Church the farther from God." I dare not say, my young friends, that it is always true, but experience unhappily proves that it is too often so. In fact, we see persons who have but a step to go to church yet

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go very little, whilst others who are farther off never miss it. In the beginning of the present century, there was, in the parish of Roybon, near St. Marcellin, in the department of the Isère, a family of working people, the head of which gave the greatest marks of sanctity. This poor man, named Antoine Ginien although he was some miles distant from the church, never failed to arrive there one of the first, to assist at all religious exercises, and especially the parish Mass, which, in that village, was said very early in the morning. He was always sure to be there, too, on Lent-days and feasts of simple devotion. In the latter years of his life, it was not possible for him to go in winter, on account of the pains he had in his limbs; but, from Easter till it was near All Saints' Day, he got up sometimes only an hour after midnight, and journeyed slowly towards the church, supported by two crutches. He usually arrived there time enough to hear Mass, but to do so he had to make a painful journey of four hours! What an example for those who will not assist at divine service in their parish church, though it would take them but a few minutes to get there, in order to discharge that most sacred duty! This holy old man died in the end of the month of December, 1809, at the age of seventy-five years.—Noel, *Cat. de Rodez*, VI., 42.

396. *A Physician who does not go to Mass.*—As I have already told you, my young friends, it is no uncommon thing to find simple peasants who reason with more intelligence and good sense than many

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proud learned men, who foolishly presume on their little knowledge, and are not ashamed to be ignorant of the most simple truths of religion. Sometime ago I was told of a somewhat curious discussion which had taken place between a physician and a laborer who worked on his farm. The doctor accosted the worthy man, appearing surprised to see him in his Sunday clothes. "Where are you going, that you are so well dressed, Lawrence?" he asked without further prelude.—"I am going to Mass."—"Bah! you would do better to stay at your work."—"Oh! sir, I never work on Sunday."—"You are a fool."—"Fool or no fool, I have made up my mind to that. I love religion, and I want to practise it, for it is it that makes me happy."—"It is the priests who have put such notions in your head."—"The priests never told me anything but what was right, and for my good."—"Never told you anything but what was right! why, they have told you things that are absurd, and contrary to common sense."—"You may say what you like, doctor, but I think what they say is right."—"Well! now, how can a sensible man like you say that? Now! they have made you believe that there are three persons in one God?"—"Yes, sir, and I believe it firmly, and I am ready to shed my blood rather than renounce that belief."—"It is all well enough to say that there is one God, one can believe that; but the idea of three persons in God! Did they go up to heaven to find that out?"—"When one has a headache, sir, you say it comes from the

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stomach, and that an emetic must be taken; did you go down into the stomach to see the connection between it and the head?"—"Oh! but I studied that."—"Well! the priest studied, too!"—"Yes! but his study is limited to teaching you incomprehensible mysteries."—"Yet, they say, doctor, that there are incomprehensible mysteries in medicine too, though it is easier to know diseases and their remedies than the perfections of God, which are so far above us."—"It is true there are difficult things in diseases, but, at least, we cure the sick, and they are the better of our advice."—"I don't know, doctor, whether you always cure your patients; but I know I am always the better of the priest's advice. You admire the peace and order that reign in my family; the good conduct of my children. Well! I owe all that to the advice and instructions of our pastor; it is not every one that could say as much, especially when they have no religion." The doctor understood that these words applied to his son, whom he had brought up without religion, and who was giving him a great deal of trouble; he thought it most prudent to put an end to this dialogue, in which he had got the worst of it, and went away, muttering something to himself. As for you, children, I am sure you prefer the plain good sense of the religious farmer to the absurd reasoning of the irreligious doctor. I am of your opinion.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 33.

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II.—VESPERS AND OTHER OFFICES.

397.—*A Basket of Water.*—It is not enough to assist at Mass on Sundays and holydays, those days must be employed in works of piety and religion. Vespers, Benediction, Sermon, when there is one, are the best and most useful of all these works. Speaking of sermons, I have heard persons say: "Where's the use? I know all that will be said; it is only losing time." A hermit was one day complaining of the same thing to an ancient Father of the desert; he said that, no matter how attentively he listened to sermons, he soon forgot all he had heard, and that, consequently, it was useless for him to go to hear them. The monk to whom he addressed himself resolved to make him understand his error, in a sensible manner; he ordered him to go to a neighboring fountain, and fetch some water in one of two baskets that were there. The good Brother immediately obeyed; but eagerly as he sought to bring the water he had drawn, it all flowed away, of course, through the interstices of the basket, so that, by the time he reached where the father was, nothing remained. Nevertheless, he was obliged to make the attempt three several times. At last, the father ordered him to set down his basket beside the other, and said to him: "What change do you perceive in the basket with which you drew the water?"—"None," answered the Brother, "except that it is cleaner than before."—"Well! my good Brother, it is so with your mind. Even as this

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basket, although it did not retain the water you drew in it, is, nevertheless, cleansed, so your mind, although it does not appear to retain the word of God, is, nevertheless, cleansed thereby from the stains of sin. Let this example be for you a subject of encouragement and consolation; do dot fail, then, to go to hear the sermons and instructions given in church; you will always derive some profit from them."—Michel-Ange Marin, *Vies des Pères des deserts.*

398. *Alexander the Great's Censer.*—It is so natural, dear friends, to behave respectfully in the church in presence of the King of kings, that the pagans themselves, when they performed any ceremonies in the temples of their idols, might have served us as models. Is it not a shameful thing that we are less respectful in presence of God than they were before statues of wood or metal? St. Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan, relates a story thereupon that will interest you. The famous Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia, was assisting one day at a solemn sacrifice, offered to I know not what false deity; perhaps it was to Jupiter, whom he had the foolish vanity to wish to resemble. Amongst the persons engaged in offering this sacrifice, there was a young lad of twelve or fifteen years, who, with a censer in his hand, stood near the altar. At the most solemn moment, a burning coal fell on his arm, and he quietly bore the excruciating pain it caused him, for fear of disturbing the ceremony ever so little. At the end of some minutes, his burned flesh produced a suffocating

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smell, that must have incommoded those who were there; but the courageous boy endured all through an excessive and misplaced respect for that idolatrous sacrifice. Alexander the Great is said to have admired this truly heroic act; but what most surprises me, my dear friends, is that we are so far from imitating this child, and that, for a mere nothing, we allow ourselves to become distracted and inattentive at the offices, sermons, and instructions of the Church. —D. Genevaux, *Hist. Chois.*, 156.

309. *A Game of Tennis During Vespers.*—Persons in high station find it hard to be resisted; their foolish pride goes sometimes so far as to put themselves on a par with God, and to complain when they are reminded of their duty in that respect. Let us pity these unhappy persons, dear friends, and take good care that we do not imitate them; otherwise, God has not abdicated His rights, and His turn will come. After a mission given in the island of Crete or Candia, St. Nicon repaired to the Greek provinces, where the Lord made him venerable to high and low by his piety, and also by the gift of prophecy and by that of miracles. One Sunday, during Vespers, the governor of a small town, the name of which I forget, was playing at tennis in the public square, almost at the doors of the church. The holy missionary, offended by the tumult that was disturbing the service, went out of the temple and reprimanded the players pretty sharply without any respect for the presence of the governor named Gregory, a man subject to anger and ill temper.

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As he was losing his game, he got angry with the saint and had him expelled from the city, neither more nor less. When about to resume his game, he was suddenly stricken with paralysis, and felt the most excruciating pains all over his body. No remedies that he tried could relieve him. At last, after trying every means in vain, he was advised by the Bishop of the town to recall St. Nicon, and to ask his pardon for the bad treatment he had given him. Without a word of reproach for his former misconduct, the saint prayed for him, cured him, and made him one of his most zealous defenders against the enemies of virtue.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 206.

400. *Shall we go to Vespers?*—It is the will of God, dear children, that the whole Sunday should be employed in His service, sanctifying it by good works and assisting at divine service. He forbids on that day all servile works and labors, and, still more, debauchery and illicit pleasures. Hear the following story on this subject: In the first days of September, 1853, some young people from Rodez, in the department of Aveyron, were drinking in a tavern, when the bell was heard calling the faithful to Vespers. One of them then proposes to go to church; but another, the skeptic of the village of Flavin, laughs at the idea, and proposes, on the contrary, to go look for Vespers in the river Viaur. Both advices were followed, for some went to church, whilst others took their way to the Viaur. The one that had given the advice to go to bathe is the first

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into the river; but, having had the imprudence to advance towards the gulf, he feels the sand going from under his feet, sinks down, down, and is drowned. It would probably have been the same with the others, had not one of them, seeing the danger, drawn back in time and held out to his companions a pole which he found on the bank. It was not till two hours after that the body of the unhappy drowned man was found. The bells which had invited him to go to Vespers, and whose warning he had despised, were heard again; but, alas! it was to ring his funeral knell and invite the faithful to pray for him. This death deeply impressed the inhabitants of the parish of Flavin, in which the accident occurred; most of the papers spoke of it. May this lesson be of service to us, dear friends!—*Daily Rewards*, No. I., VI., p. 5.

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CHAPTER XIV.

THIRD COMMANDMENT OF THE CHURCH.

Confess your sins at least once every year.

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401. *There is no Time now for Confession.*—Oh! my dear children, what a good thing it is that the Church obliges us to confess our sins at least once a year! However necessary, however indispensable this salutary remedy may be for us, experience proves that, if we were not obliged by a formal precept to do it, we would unhappily often forget it. The Venerable Bede relates, in his *Saxon Chronicles*, that King Conrad, a very pious prince, had at his court a nobleman to whom he was much attached, on account of the great services he had received from him. Yet, notwithstanding the repeated entreaties of the prince, this poor gentleman remained several years, now under one pretence, now under another, without approaching the tribunal of penance. At last, he was attacked by a dangerous malady, and the king went to visit him; he returned again to the charge and urged him strongly to have a confessor, but he could do nothing with him. He went again some days after, and, finding him at the last extremity, be-

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sought him again, in the most pressing terms, not to die in that sad state. But the unhappy man, after remaining some moments without replying, threw a wild look on the king, and exclaimed: "Prince, there is no time now for confession; I am lost; hell is my portion!" Saying these words, he expired in impenitence and despair; all who witnessed this scene felt the blood frozen in their veins, such an impression did this fearful death make upon them.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, VI., p. 62.

402. *The Establishment of the Annual Confession.* —For ages, Christians had no need of being obliged, by an express commandment, to confess their sins. And, my friends, are sick people ever seen waiting till they are commanded to send for a doctor? Do they not eagerly ask for one as soon as they feel themselves ill? It was only in 1216 that the Church, anxious to remedy the laxity that had been manifested by some Christians, made it a precept for every one to confess, at least once a year, all their sins with the necessary dispositions. It was the fourth General Council held in the Church of St. John of Lateran, in Rome, that made this law. It was conceived in these terms: "Let each of the faithful who has attained the age of discretion, confess secretly all their sins to their own pastor, at least once a year, and let them take care to perform, to the best of their ability, the penance that shall be imposed upon them. Let them also receive, at least at the festival of Easter the Sacrament of the Eucharist,

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unless that, by the advice of their confessor, and for some just and reasonable cause, they may deem it right to abstain for some time from communion. Failing in this, let them be denied entrance into the church during life, and Christian burial at their death." Eight years before this law was made, that is to say in 1208, it was decreed by a Council held in Paris that persons who had not been to Holy Communion, at least once, before Palm Sunday, could not receive it within the next fifteen days, and would consequently be obliged to wait till the Octave-day of Easter. And, in order to stimulate them a little in the accomplishment of this sacred duty, the Council obliged them to continue the fast of Lent till that day.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 588.

403. *A Doctor at Easter!*—I have somewhere read, dear friends, the ingenious comparison employed by a holy priest to show how absurd it is to wait for Easter to go to confession, when one is guilty of any sin. He ascends the pulpit, makes the sign of the cross, and thus commences his sermon: "On my way hither, brethren, to exercise my ministry, I chanced to see a heart-rending sight. A young man was driving very fast across the square; suddenly the horse takes fright, runs away, and breaks the carriage to pieces; the unhappy man escapes death, but he is bruised and mangled in every part of his body. People gather round him, they express their compassion, are much interested in his fate, and speak of going with all haste to fetch a doctor. 'A

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doctor!' he exclaims, in surprise; 'I will not have a doctor till Easter!' You may judge how amazed the spectators were, they all thought that the poor young man was crazed by his fall. This story affects you, brethren!—Well! that unhappy man, that madman, is you, yourselves. Running rapidly in the career of vice, you have had a fatal fall; the noblest part of you, your soul, is more than wounded; it is dead. You are spoken to of a physician who is all-powerful, not of himself, but by the mission he has received from God, and who can restore you to life, and you say: 'At Easter, at Easter I will apply to this great doctor!'" This ingenious comparison made a lively impression on the minds of the hearers, most of whom hastened to have recourse immediately to that great physician, and were healed.—Grillois, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 288.

404. *I Take Medicine Once a Year.*—Although the Church does not oblige us to confess more than once a year, it is certain that she would be happy to see us profit oftener by these two great graces; she earnestly exhorts us thereto, and our own wants require it. A man being on a journey once, passed through a town where lived an old friend of his. He went to see him, flattering himself that he would spend the rest of the day pleasantly with him; alas! he found him in a sad state. This unhappy man was not to say old; but, undermined by habitual sufferings, he had grown very old within a few years, so that his friend could scarcely recognize him. "I did not ex-

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pect to see you in such a condition," said he. "I am grieved to see that your health is very bad. However, you must not despair of being cured. If the doctors here are not as skilful as you could wish, you must consult others. What regimen have you observed since your health began to fail?"—"None."—"How! none; have you tried no remedies, then?"—"Why, yes; every year I take a dose of medicine."—"And is that all?"—"Of course it is, and I think it a great deal; I had no small trouble to decide on doing it."—"I am not surprised, then, to see you reduced to such a state of pain and debility. How do you think that purgatives, used but once a year, could effect your cure! You required, from the very beginning of your illness, a course of remedies, which, one, as it were, supporting the other, and attacking together the root of the evil, might have destroyed it and restored you to health. Then you should, afterwards, to prevent relapses, make it a rule to take some purgatives now and then, during the year, and subject yourself to a certain regimen. For want of these wise precautions, the disease has made continual progress; it is, so to say, rooted in your system, and your state is becoming every day more dangerous. There may still be time to have recourse to remedies, but there is not a moment to lose; so, you must this very day call in the best physician that is to be had here and place yourself in his hands."—"I feel that you are right, my friend, nevertheless I will not follow your advice. I will, as usual, take a dose

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of medicine once a year as long as I live, and nothing more. That is my custom, and I will not change it." What do you think of this man? do you think his conduct very sensible? You will doubtless answer, children, that it appears to you, on the contrary, very unreasonable, and you are right. Try, then, never to merit the same reproach.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, VI., 61.

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CHAPTER XV.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT OF THE CHURCH.

Receive your God worthily at least in Easter time.

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405. *An Unworthy Communicant Possessed by the Devil.*—The fourth commandment of the Church, my very dear friends, obliges us to make Holy Communion at least once a year, and within the Paschal time; but it would not fulfil the precept to make that communion in a sacrilegious manner. A young man, who lived in criminal habits, would, nevertheless, make his Easter Communion. The shame of declaring his sins, and the fear that his confessor might put him off to another time, induced him to conceal a part of his sins in confession; he received absolution, and had the audacity to present himself at the holy table, and receive the adorable body of Jesus Christ. This new Judas did not make his sacrilegious communion with impunity. Scarcely had he received the Sacrament when he was possessed by a devil who shook him every day in a horrible manner The bishop, having ascertained the reality of the possession, sent a messenger to exorcise the demoniac The missionary, in order to let the spectators see

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that the man was really possessed, commanded the devil to lift him up and hold him suspended in the air; the devil did so. He then commanded him to give him back the body; the fiend obeyed: he threw him on the ground without hurting him in any way. "Answer me," said the priest then to him—"why didst thou take possession of the body of this unhappy Christian?"—"Because I had a right to him; he is mine, for I reign in his heart ever since he made a bad communion." This declaration struck all who heard it with a salutary fear, and did them more good, perhaps, than the sight of a fervent communion.—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 289.

406. *I Want to Make My Easter Communion.*—We sometimes find children, young people, and even aged persons, who seriously neglect the most important of their duties, and still imagine that they can make their Easter Communion. It is a gross mistake, my friends; for, in order to be admitted to Holy Communion, one must render himself worthy of it. A bad Christian went one day to his pastor and said to him: "You will please come to the sacristy, father, to hear my confession, for I want to make my Easter Communion. It is necessary to obey the Church, and one of her commandments is to receive worthily at Easter time."—"Very good," said the priest, "but take notice of the word *worthily*, that, of course, means being well disposed. Have you the necessary dispositions? I doubt it much, knowing you as I do."—"You know me for a

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jolly good fellow, father, that's all."—"You want to go to communion to-morrow in order to obey the Church, but is there not another commandment of the Church which says: *Sundays and holydays Mass thou shalt hear?* yet I do not see you often at Mass on Sundays or holydays. Does not the Church command you to keep festival days holy? yet you work on those days. Again, does not the Church command you to abstain from flesh meat on Fridays? yet you eat meat all the year round, and you in perfect health. Are you not also commanded by the Church to fast in Lent and on Ember days? Do you do so?"—"I always fast on Good Friday, father! I never miss that."—"But I know further," continued the priest, "that you have taught your children so well that they know how to curse and blaspheme as well as yourself, and that you get drunk two or three times a week."—"Father, I will tell you all that in confession; come now and hear me, for I want to go to my duty."—"I am quite willing to hear your confession, but I cannot give you Holy Communion till you have corrected your evil habits." A good lesson, perhaps, for some of us, my dear children; well for us if we know how to profit by it.—LASSAUSSE, *Explic. du Cat. de l'Empire*, 313.

407. *Let us not Wait too Long to Make our Easter Communion.*—If we thought seriously of the danger to which we expose ourselves in postponing our conversion, dear friends, we would set about it with a little more zeal and exactness. The Abbé

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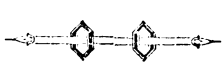
Favre, Missionary Apostolic of Savoy, cites an example of which he was himself a witness, and which happened, I believe, in 1827 or 1828. You will find it related in an excellent book entitled *Le Ciel Ouvert* (Heaven open). At St. Jean de Maurienne, if I am not mistaken, a father of a family always put off fulfilling his Paschal duty, notwithstanding the repeated warnings of his pastor, who was a priest full of zeal and charity. On Palm Sunday he put it off to Holy Thursday, on Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday, on Easter Sunday to Low Sunday. Finally, when the previous Saturday came, instead of preparing himself, he must needs put it off again to the following week. Alas! dear friends, there was no following week for him, for the very next day after this last postponement, that is to say, the Monday after Low Sunday, he went to work in the vineyard with one of his servants, and the first shovelful of earth he raised, he fell backwards on a vine-prop. They thought he had only swooned; his servant tries to raise him up; he calls assistance, a doctor comes, feels his pulse and declares that it is too late, that the unhappy man is dead!—Behold, children, how well might our Lord say: *Watch, and be ready, for ye know not the day nor the hour.*—FAVRE, *le Ciel Ouvert*, p. 364.



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CHAPTER XVI.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT OF THE CHURCH.

Lent, Ember-days, and Vigils thou shalt fast.

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408. *How the First Christians Fasted.*—We sometimes complain, dear friends, of the slight privations, fasts and abstinences imposed upon us by the Church. But how would it be if we were obliged to the same penances as the first Christians? I find a very remarkable example of this in the life of St. Fructueux, Bishop of Tarragona, in Spain, and one of the most celebrated martyrs of the third century. He was condemned, with two of his deacons, Augurus and Eulogius, to be burned alive, during the persecution of the Emperor Valerian, for refusing to adore the false gods, or the Emperor's image. As they were all three being conducted to the amphitheatre, which was to be the place of their torment, all the people came crowding around Fructueux to pity him, for his virtue had made him beloved by every one, even the pagans. The faithful wept also like the others, inwardly consoling themselves, nevertheless, with his approaching glory. Several, by a movement of

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charity, offered him a drink, in order to relieve him a little. But it was on Friday, then a day of minor fast, which was not broken till after nones, that is to say, about three o'clock in the afternoon, differing from the greater fasts, such as that of Lent, which was prolonged till after the hour of Vespers, that is to say, till six o'clock in the evening; it being Friday, I say, Fructueux refused to take this drink, because the hour for the repast was not yet come, as it was only ten o'clock in the morning. "We are fasting," said he, "I cannot drink: it is not yet the ninth hour of the day, that is to say, three o'clock in the afternoon." So he went on his way without accepting anything, and, a little while after, he went to receive in Heaven the reward of his virtues.—D. Genevaux, *Hist. Chois.*, 153.

409. *The Fasts of the Emperor Charlemagne.*—Although fasting did not agree with Charlemagne, he, nevertheless, observed faithfully all those that were prescribed by the Church. Only, on account of the officers who eat after him, he took his meal a little earlier on those days, that is about two o'clock in the afternoon, although it was still customary to wait till three. A bishop having come to the court during Lent, was scandalized at the Emperor's eating too soon on fast days, and took the liberty of reproaching him for it. The Emperor heard him quietly and said: "Your advice is good, and I will follow it, but I order you to take nothing until my officers have made their repast." Now, there were

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five consecutive tables. The princes and the dukes who were in attendance on the Emperor only eat after him; the counts then waited on the dukes; after the counts' table came that of the military officers, and lastly, that of the minor officers of the household. In this way, it was far in the night when the last table was served. The bishop, who was obliged for some days to eat only after the others, soon perceived that the Emperor was right in taking his meal at two o'clock on fasting days, and that he did so through compassion for his officers, so that they might take theirs a little sooner. What a contrast between the age of Charlemagne and ours, dear friends! Then, people of all conditions made it a duty to observe the law of fasting, and now, in almost all states of life, people make it a sort of point of honor to violate it! Whence, then, comes this difference? Ah! it is that people were then truly Christians, whereas there are now many persons who are so only in name.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, VI., 108.

410. *The Effect of Reading a Good Book.*—A bad Christian, who had much reason to reproach himself before God, had occasion to read a book entitled *The History of Fasting*. He was struck on learning how rigorously fasts were kept in the first ages. He thought within himself: "I call myself a Christian, and I have never fasted; if I had lived in the times when the penitential canons were followed to the letter, to how many years fasting should I have been condemned for all the iniquities whereof I am guilty!

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The first Christians made no collation on fast days, all abstained from wine, and a great number contented themselves with bread and water; it was only in the evening that they took even that." What he had read did not leave his mind, and he unceasingly made new reflections on it. At length God touched his heart. Penetrated with a lively sorrow for his sins, he determined to do a rigorous penance, and with that intention entered a monastery where the strictest silence was observed, with a continual fast. It was, I think, the Order of Minors, which, as you probably know, my friends, was founded in the fifteenth century by St. Francis of Paula, who came to France in 1481 to assist Louis XI. in his latter years and prepare him for death. This poor converted Christian entered this rigorous order; he lived and died holily in it, and proved once more how much fruit good reading may produce.—Lassausse, *Explic. du Cat. de l'Empire*, 317.

411. *How King Stanislaus Passed His Lent.*—We are edified, my dear friends, when we see a priest, a religious, or a lay person religiously observe the most painful precepts of religion; but our admiration is still greater when a prince or a king is in question. Such was Stanislaus, a former king of Poland, afterwards Duke of Lorraine. A faithful observer of th ancient discipline of the Church, he made but one meal, not even allowing himself the collation; moreover, on Fridays he denied himself the use of fish and eggs. From his dinner on Holy Thursday, till the following

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Saturday, at noon, he denied himself every species of nourishment, even bread and water. That interval, specially consecrated to the memory of Our Lord's Passion, the pious monarch employed, as far as his affairs permitted, in prayer, and in visiting churches and houses of charity, where he poured forth abundant alms. He every year prepared for the feast of Christmas by nine whole days of fasting and abstinence. In a word, the austerity of his life recalled, in modern times, what history teaches us of the fervor of the early faithful. All that he had practised in his youth, and in the vigor of his life, he found practicable even in his extreme old age. It was only through submission to the holy authority which he respected in his pastor, that he consented, when over eighty years of age, not, indeed, to infringe on the commandment of the Church, but to moderate a little the severities he added thereto. Notwithstanding these austerities, that would be admired even in an anchoret, King Stanislaus, justly named *the Beneficent*, lived to the age of eighty-four years; he died at Luneville in 1766.—Filassier, *Dict. Hist. Educ.*, II., p. 275.

412. *The Fasts of Louis XVI.*—When, at the day of judgment, God will reveal the good works of each, we shall all be surprised, children, to see wha was done by persons whose high rank seemed to give them more freedom and facility in dispensing themselves therefrom. The laws of abstinence and fasting, of which so little account is made, and which

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people in the world are sometimes ashamed to observe, were sacred for Louis XVI., and he would not have dared to violate them without the most legitimate reasons. What proves his exactitude in conforming thereto, is, that having learned, one Saturday, that the Archbishop of Paris had abolished the fast on Fridays in Advent, which at that time was still observed, he said to the person who brought the news: "It would have been well if the Archbishop had sent his decree here two days sooner, it would have saved me from fasting yesterday, which was a Friday of Advent." The misfortunes he had to endure did not make him forget his duties; they made him, on the contrary, more anxious to acquit himself of them. During his captivity, the commissioners had sometimes the cruelty to annoy him even in his conscience. If, in conformity with the privations imposed by the Church, he did not take any breakfast, they gorged themselves that day, and ridiculed him for his scruples. On one of those days he was served with nothing but meat. Louis contented himself with replying to their indecent raillery: "I do not interfere with your conscience, why do you interfere with mine?" So saying, he soaked his bread in a little wine, and that was all he eat.—Guillois, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 289.

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CHAPTER XVII.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT OF THE CHURCH.

Fridays and Ember-days Flesh Thou Shalt not Taste.

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413. *It is not Food that gives Health.*—Persons who have not the happiness of having religion, never fail to find a thousand pretexts for dispensing with the laws of abstinence; they especially plead their health and imagine that abstaining from meat is injurious to them. But, my friends, it is not the food in itself that gives or preserves health, it is the blessing that God bestows upon it. I find a proof of this in the story of Daniel and his companions. Nabuchodonozor, king of Babylon, having destroyed the city of Jerusalem and carried all the Jews into captivity, ordered one of his officers, named Malazar, to take from amongst the children of Israel, and the race of kings and princes, young men who united beauty to wisdom and knowledge, that they might dwell in the king's palace, and they were to be taught the language of the Chaldeans. Nabuchodonozor ordered, moreover, that they should be served every

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day with the meats that were set before him, and the wine he drank himself, so that having been nourished for three years in this way, they might afterwards present themselves and dwell in the prince's presence. There were four of them there who were children of Juda, namely: Daniel, Ananias, Misaël, and Azarias, who were called Balthazar, Sidrach, Misach, and Abednego. Now Daniel made a firm resolve in his heart not to defile himself by eating or drinking what came from the king's table. He went about it so well that he obtained that favor of Malazar, who had been charged with the care of their food. That officer tried them for ten days, in order to see whether, giving them only vegetables to eat and water to drink, as they requested, they would not become thinner. The ten days being past, they appeared much better and in better condition than the young people who eat the king's meats. Malazar then kept for himself the meats and the wine allowed for them, and served them only with vegetables. Now God gave those young people the science and the knowledge of all books and of all wisdom, and He bestowed on Daniel in particular the understanding of all visions and of all dreams. After such great advantages from temperance, who would not prize that virtue, which is favored by God with gifts so great?—*Daniel*, Chap. 1.

414. *Reflections of a Physician on Friday.*—Never forget, children, that the greatest enemy of virtue and duty, is human respect; people do not dare to

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act differently from others, and hence it is that when they have neither firmness, nor resolution, they allow themselves to be drawn into this weakness. Happily every one is not so. A celebrated physician, who was, at the same time, a great naturalist, was invited to dine at M. Buffon's. There were at dinner some philosophers, still more famous for the incredulity they made show of, than for their knowledge of mathematics or belles lettres. It was on Friday, and the host, who had, perhaps, forgotten that it was a day of abstinence, had only meat soup served in the first course. The Christian doctor took none, and was determined to wait for the desert, even, sooner than violate the rules of abstinence. Most of the guests perceived this, and many of them knew the cause. Amongst these was Diderot, unhappily so well known for his hatred to religion. He first put this question to the doctor: "Doctor, why do you not eat?" and he immediately added with a mocking smile: "Is it because to-day is Friday, and that you see nothing here you can eat? Now, do you really think that flesh meat is not so good on some days as on others?"—"Yes, Sir," answered the physician; "yes, I am satisfied that flesh meat is injurious, every day on which the Church has seen fit to prohibit its use; I am a physician and a Christian, and am, therefore, more capable of judging than others, who are, perhaps, neither one nor the other." Thi modest and courageous answer produced its effect. Buffon called his butler, and told him in a low voice

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to remove the dishes, and to serve no meats in the second course. It was done accordingly, and Diderot was not the last to applaud it, for we cannot help admiring a generous, upright man, even when his conduct is a reproach to ours.—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 293.

415. *What Goes Into the Mouth Defiles not the Soul.*—I have sometimes heard, and, perhaps, you may have heard yourselves, too, children, persons pretending to justify the violation of the holy law of abstinence, saying in a tone of levity: "What use is it to impose such privations on one's self? What goes into the mouth defiles not the soul." Well! it is a king of France, Louis XVI. himself, who is about to answer them. From the time of Louis XV., a prince who was generally rather unscrupulous, it had been customary at the court of Versailles to serve both fish and flesh on days of abstinence, when there was a grand hunt. The pious king Louis XVI. had no sooner come to the throne than he hastened to reform this scandalous abuse. An old officer was heard to complain, and did not fail to quote the saying that —*What goes into the mouth does not defile the soul.* He thought himself dispensed by this famous axiom from following the rule which the Church imposes on all her children. "No, Sir," replied the king vehemently, "it is not precisely eating the meat that defiles the soul and renders it guilty, but it is the revolt against a lawful authority, and the violation of one of its formal precepts; it then remains to ascer-

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tain whether Christ gave to His Church the power of giving commandments to her children, and whether He ordered the latter to obey them. The catechism assures us that He did; and since you read the Gospel you ought to know that Our Lord somewhere says: *Whosoever heareth not the Church, let him be unto thee as the heathen and the publican.* Now, Sir, I am of opinion that neither you, nor any one here present, would wish to be considered in that light." These words, coming from the mouth of a prince, and a prince who practised so well what he said, produced all the effect that might be expected. There was no talk of eating meat even after the chase on days of abstinence.—FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, 1, 5.

416. *A New Communicant's Friday.*—In the town of Avignon there was a child who was about to make his first communion. The parents of this child were not very religious; like many others now-a-days, they did not observe the laws of the Church, and, what is unhappily too common, every one in the house followed their bad example. The child's confessor explaining to him the danger there was for him in following an example so pernicious, and the real sin he committed thereby, forbade him to imitate his parents and ordered him to observe the abstinence prescribed by the Church. When the following Friday came the pious child, docile to the advice of his confessor, refused to eat meat. The father was angry with him, and said: "See that you obey me and do as I do myself."—"Father," said the sweet child

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mildly, "give me whatever orders you please; in all that is not contrary to the law of God, I will always obey you; but if I obeyed you in this, I should have to violate that law, and I cannot do it." The father became furious; he began to swear at his son and threaten him, but the child still answered with the same mildness: "Father, you order me to do what the Church forbids, I cannot obey you." Then the father's fury was at its height, he ordered his son to go to his room, not to leave it, and to eat or drink nothing but dry bread and water. The child instantly obeyed. Soon after, the father was obliged to go out on business. The mother, who had no more piety than the father, but loved her son very tenderly, took the opportunity to go in haste to the child's room with some little delicacies for him to eat. "My dear," said she, "your father is gone out, so I have brought you something to eat."—"Thank you, mamma," the child replied, "but my father forbids me to take anything but bread and water; his prohibition is not contrary to the law of God, and I will obey him; mamma, I cannot accept what you have been so kind as to bring me." These words of the child made a lively impression on the mother; her heart was torn; she went away in tears, and hastened to tell her husband what had passed. The father could not withstand the sight of this so wise and Christian conduct on the part of his son; his harshness was overcome. He sent for the child, and, with tears in his eyes, clasped him in his arms, say-

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ing: "My son, not only will we not force you to eat meat on Fridays, but from this day forth we will give you no more the bad example we have heretofore given you; we will abstain from meat ourselves on days when the use of it is forbidden." The father kept his word, and ever after the whole family observed the laws of the Church. Beloved children, there is an example you ought to imitate, if your parents were so unhappy as to require of you things contrary to the law of God.—*Etrennes à la Jeunesse Chrét., Années* 1852–63.

417. *Abstinence of a Little Mulatto.*—You are very young, my little friends, but there are little children, perhaps, still younger than you who might serve you as models. Here is a proof of this: On account of the excessive heat which reigns under the torrid zone, many children of the Christian School of St. Denis, in the Isle of Bourbon, take their midday meal under the banana trees and the noble date tree that shade the yard of the establishment. Some years ago, on a day of abstinence, a very young child of the infant class, named Ernest Laviron, gave a fine example of fidelity to the laws of the Church. He had received, as usual, his large plate of rice, for there are few besides the Europeans who use bread at their meals; for the other inhabitants, boiled rice takes its place. So Ernest receives his plate of rice, over which was poured some curry sauce; but this sauce was prepared with grease, and the child had heard in the Reflection which the Brother made in the morning.

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prayer, as is usual in the Christian Schools, that it was a day of abstinence; he sends away his breakfast, then, without touching it, thinking, poor child, that he could not eat his rice because the curry sauce was on it. About three o'clock in the afternoon, Ernest goes up to the Brother; he found himself growing very weak; "Ah! dear Brother," said he, in his simple language, "the heart of me is weak." As the Brother was but lately arrived in the colony, he did not understand what he meant, and asked him to explain himself; then he said: "Me has not eaten since yesterday, and me have the heart weak."—"How! it is three o'clock, and you have eaten nothing! Did they, then, bring you no breakfast, my child?"—"Yes, but as my rice was mixed with fat, me sent it all to the house; you said in the Reflection that to-day, Ember-day, one must not eat meat." The Brother admired the fidelity of the dear child, who might easily have put the sauce one side and eaten his rice, as he then made him understand, but, through delicacy of conscience, he had preferred to remain fasting, rather than expose himself to transgress the commandment—"Fridays and Ember-days flesh thou shalt not taste." The Brother got him something to eat, and the good Ernest went gaily back to his class.—*Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. XXXIX., p. 12.

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THIRD PART.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON VIRTUE AND VICE.

I.—ON VIRTUE IN GENERAL.

418. *Decision in Favor of Virtue.*—Virtue is the most precious of all treasures, children, even by pagans. A charming story on this subject is related by Crantor, a Greek philosopher, who lived more than three hundred years before Christ. "One day," says he, "the divinities who preside over riches, voluptuousness, health, and virtue, suddenly appeared amongst the various nations of Greece assembled to celebrate the Olympic Games. They desired, in their wisdom, that the judges of the Areopagus should assign to each of them the rank they occupy, according to their several degrees of influence on the happiness of men. Riches displayed its magnificence, and already began to dazzle the eyes of the judges,

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when Voluptuousness brought down its merit by showing that the only end of Riches was to conduct to pleasure. Voluptuousness was applauded, but then Health rose, and easily proved that without it the greatest pleasures, the sweetest enjoyments, are bitter, and that, without Health, grief soon takes the place of joy. Then the Areopagites appeared decided in favor of the latter; but Virtue terminated the dispute, for she made all the Greeks admit that riches, pleasure, and health do not last long, and that if they be not accompanied by virtue, they become evils for those who do not know how to use them with discretion. At this discourse, so simple and so true, every one clapped their hands, and the first rank was accorded to Virtue, the second to Health." —Noel, *Cat. de Rodez*, III., 342.

419. *St. John's Partridge.*—True virtue, my dear friends, is not ferocious; on the contrary, it knows how to take, when requisite, a little rest and harmless recreation, in order to apply itself afterwards more courageously to its duties. In this connection Cassian relates the following of St. John the Evangelist. One day that holy Apostle had a partridge in his hand and was amusing himself caressing it, when he was met by a man dressed in the garb of a hunter. This man, astonished that an Apostle, so high and so holy, who had filled the earth with his fame, should amuse himself with sports so childish in appearance, said to him: "Tell, me, then, are you that Apostle John who is spoken of everywhere, and whose reputation made

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me wish to see him? If so, how does it happen that you divert yourself with a bird like children."—"My friend," answered the holy Apostle, "what is that you hold in your hand?"—"It is a bow," replied the hunter.—"Why is it not bent? It seems to me that it should be always ready?"—"That could not be, because if it were always bent, when I came to use it, it would no longer be strong enough to dart an arrow on the game."—"If that be so," replied St. John, "you need not be surprised at what I am doing. Our mind, too, requires to relax at times, because if we kept it always bent, it would be enfeebled by that restraint, and we could no longer make use of it, when we would apply it again with strength and vigor."—D. Genevaux, *Hist. Chois.*, 465.

420. *St. Nicholas and His Three Purses.*—Virtue is ingenious, my dear friends, it knows how to find out wants to relieve; but it is no less skilful in concealing itself, because it remembers that Our Lord said: "Do not your good works that they may be seen of men." St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra, in Asia Minor, had heard that a man of noble race, named Petura, had become so wretchedly poor that he had resolved to let his three daughters take to evil courses, because he had no means of settling them for life. Thereupon, taking advantage of a dark night, the holy bishop glided softly to this poor man's house, and threw into the window a purse filled with gold pieces. Having learned, very soon after, that Petura had profited by his gifts to obtain an honorable position for the eldest

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of his three daughters, he was so well pleased that he threw a second purse in at the same window, the following night. He did the same a third time, taking good care to hide himself so as not to be seen. But his stratagem was discovered by the father, who had stationed himself where he could get a sight of his unknown benefactor. Then St. Nicholas, unwilling to have the affair made public, besought him on his knees not to tell any one. That generous disciple of Jesus Christ was mindful of the words of Our Lord: "When you give an alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth; so that your alms shall remain hidden, and your heavenly Father, who seeth in secret, will one day reward you before all men." The gentleman promised St. Nicholas to say nothing of it for that time, but the affair did not fail to become known, for St. Nicholas was in the habit of doing good works of the kind.—*Life of St. Nicholas.*

421. *A Physician who could not cure Himself.*—People of the world so little understand true virtue that they often confound it with egotism or interest. It is not so, children, with true Christians; they are as harsh to themselves as they are good to others. The history of the Fathers of the Desert relates that, amongst several great personages who flourished in Egypt, in the fourth century, there was a solitary, named Benjamin, who had received from God the gift of curing the sick merely by laying hands on them, or by saying some short prayers to their intention, or rubbing them with a little blessed oil. The

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gift he had of curing others did not prevent him from falling sick himself of a fearful dropsy. His body swelled so, and became so unwieldy, that he could no longer go through the door of his cell. He lived eight months in this state, and then died. Well! during all that time he continued to cure others of all sorts of diseases, without complaining that he could find no remedy for his own. He even tried to console those whom he saw touched with compassion for his sad state, and told them: "Pray to God for my soul, and do not trouble yourselves about my body, for even when I was in perfect health, it was little use to me." He died some time after in these sentiments of humility and resignation.—PERE MARIN, *Vies des Pères des Déserts.*

422. *One, Two, Three, Four, Five. . . .*—When we do our actions for God, dear friends, we must never be afraid of doing too much, because He is rich enough to reward us. There is a charming story on this subject related in the book entitled "The Spiritual Meadow" (*le Prè Spirituel*), composed, according to some authors, by St. Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, who lived in the seventh century. A solitary, who had his cell in a desert, a long way from the fountain to which he went for water, found himself so fatigued with the journey, one day when he went to draw some, that he was obliged to sit down to rest himself. He began to reflect: "Is it necessary," said he to himself, "that I should give myself so much trouble? It is better for me to go

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and live near the water, and build my cell there." The next time he had to go to the fountain with his pitcher, he examined where he could place his cell more conveniently, in what way he would build it, and the life he would lead therein. Whilst he was absorbed in these reflections he thought he heard a man's voice behind him counting: *One, two, three, four*, and so on. Astonished that, in the desert, there was any who measured distance, or calculated anything, he turned his head and saw no one. He continues his way, thinking still of what he purposed doing, and hears again the same voice, continuing to count. He turns round a second time and still sees nothing. But the same thing having happened a third time, and having again turned his head, he sees a young man radiant with light, who says to him: "Be not alarmed, I am an angel of God counting all the steps you take, so that none may go unrewarded." Saying that, he disappeared. Then the solitary entering into himself: "What!" said he, "could I have lost my senses, when I wished to give up so great an advantage, and to deprive myself of such certain gain, by bringing my cell nearer the water? On the contrary, I will go farther yet from the spring, so that I may, for the future, have more trouble, and consequently more merit.—RODRIGUEZ, *Chris. Perf.*, III., 128.

423. *The Monk's Rough Habit.*—Do you remember, dear friends, having read in the Gospel these words: "He who will come after me, let him take

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up his cross and follow me?" That means that we must suffer, if we would work out our salvation in this world. Denis, the Carthusian, relates that a certain novice, having much fervor in the beginning, came afterwards, as sometimes happens, to fall into laxity and tepidity. All seemed easy to him at first, but a little while after, the exercises of mortification and humility became irksome to him. Amongst other things, he could not bear a certain rough, coarse garment, worn by the novices of his order. One night, when he was asleep, he saw in a dream Jesus Christ bearing a very heavy cross, trying to go up a steep, narrow flight of steps, which increased his trouble much more. The novice, touched with compassion, immediately offered to help him to carry his cross; but the Saviour, regarding him with an angry countenance, said: "How dost thou dare offer to carry my cross, which is so heavy, when you find it a trouble to wear, for my sake, your habit, that weighs so little in comparison?" At the same moment the vision disappeared, and the novice awoke, remaining so confused by this reproach, and at the same time so resolved to suffer all for Christ, that ever after that habit, so rough and coarse, which he had found it so hard to bear, became for him a source of joy and contentment. Let us make the same reflection, dear friends, and we shall find nothing too difficult in the Christian life.—Rodriguez, *Chris, Perf.*, VI., 164.

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II.—ON SIN IN GENERAL.

424. *Physiognomy of Socrates.*—We are all born, dear friends, with inclinations rather bad than good, because of the unhappy consequences of original sin; but we may and should labor to correct ourselves; in that it is that virtue properly consists. The Pagan philosophers themselves understood this. Plutarch positively relates it of Socrates, a famous philosopher who lived more than four hundred years before Christ. He says that an excellent physiognomist, having considered him with attention, could not help saying to whoever would hear him that Socrates was a man inclined to lewdness, to anger, to drunkenness and many other vices. The disciples and friends of the philospher were indignant at this accusation; they were much excited against this man and would even have laid violent hands on him. But Socrates stopped them, saying with much candor: "Be still; this man is right, for I would actually be what he describes me, if I had not applied myself to the study of philosophy and the practice of virtue; it is by that I have succeeded in correcting myself of all those faults and many others besides." If a philosopher, who was aided by natural lights alone, could so overcome his evil inclinations, what may we not do, dear friends, we who are Christians, and who have the assistance of divine grace, a thousand times more powerful than nature?—RODRIGUEZ, *Chris. Perf.*, III., 103.

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425. *The Two Horses' Tails.*—There is a proverb that says: "He that takes in too much binds badly," that is to say, he who would do too many things at once, or correct himself of all his faults, or acquire every virtue at once, will never succeed. Hear the famous Sertorius, one of the most valiant foes of the Romans in Spain. Having remarked that his soldiers were all discouraged by the loss of a battle, he had them drawn up, and ordered two horses to be brought out before them, one, old, emaciated, and worn out; the other, young, strong, handsome, and especially remarkable for the beauty of his tail and the quantity of hair with which it was furnished. Near the weak horse he placed a tall, powerful man, and near the vigorous horse, a weak, insignificant little man. The signal being given, the strong man took hold with both hands of the weak horse's tail, and began to pull it with all his might, as if to pull it off; but the little weak man commenced plucking out one by one the hairs of the strong horse's tail. After the former had taken much useless trouble, and had set all the spectators laughing, he gave up his undertaking; whilst the little man, without any trouble, soon showed the tail of his vigorous horse stripped of all its hairs. Then Sertorius rising said: "My friends, you see that patience is more effectual than strength, and that many things which cannot be brought to an end all at once, whatever efforts are made, are easily accomplished little by little. Do not allow yourselves, then, to be cast down by one failure; be sure that return-

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ing often to the charge your perseverance will at length make you succeed." A wise lesson, my friends, especially for those amongst you who are discouraged by the slightest check they encounter.—FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, II., 323.

426. *The Four Cypresses to Pull Up.*—The surest means of succeeding in the war we ought to make on our passions, my friends, is to resist them in their very first assaults. An ancient poet, Ovid, justly said:

"Oppose the malady before it takes root,
If it remain it defies the art of medicine."

A holy hermit lived with his disciple in the neighborhood of a cypress wood. He one day ordered this young man, who asked him what was the surest and easiest means of preserving oneself pure and spotless, to pull up four cypresses which he himself pointed out. The first was yet quite small, and it was only play for the young man to pull it up; the second, which, doubtless, had already stronger roots, offered but little more resistance; but coming to the third, he found it necessary to make several attempts and pull with all his strength before he could succeed in rooting it up. When it came the fourth's turn, the young novice vainly employed the whole strength of his sinewy arm; he could make nothing of it, and he was forced to say so, and give up the attempt. His spiritual father seeing him exhausted with fatigue and covered with sweat, then said to him: You have there an example, my son, of how it is with us and

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our evil passions: the less time we give to the impure thoughts and images that assail our minds, the less root they shall take in our heart, and the easier it will be to combat and extirpate them.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 475.

427. *How St. John Chrysostom Feared Sin.*—No thing equals the hatred and horror which the Saints had for sin; their history is full of facts which prove it; I will choose but one amongst a thousand. The Emperor of Constantinople was mortally exasperated against St. John Chrysostom, patriarch of the same city. One day, inflamed with anger, he said in presence of his officers: "I wish I could be revenged on this bishop." Four or five of his courtiers, who were present, gave their opinion. The first said: "Send him so far away into exile that you will never see him again." The second: "Confiscate all his goods." The third: "Cast him into prison, loaded with chains." The fourth: "Are you not master? Get rid of him, sire, by a death he has so well deserved." A fifth, more intelligent, and who knew the holy patriarch better: "You are mistaken, gentlemen," said he, "none of those is the way to be avenged on the bishop or to punish him. If you send him into exile, the whole earth is his country; if you confiscate his goods, you take them from the poor, and not from him, because he gives them away in charity; if you put him in a dungeon, he will kiss his chains, and deem himself happy; finally, if you condemn him to death, you will open heaven to him.

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Prince, would you be revenged on John, force him to commit a sin; I know him; that man fears but one thing in the world, sin. No, he fears neither exile, nor the loss of his goods, nor iron, nor fire, nor torments, he fears nothing but sin." Admirable sentiments, are they not, dear children? Oh! how happy we should be, could it be said of us as of him: "That boy, that young man fears nothing in the world but sin!"—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 301.

428. *A Faster who does not Fast.*—Virtue is so beautiful, children, it has such a charm that people are often seen trying to practice it only through hypocrisy. Blunderers! they all have the trouble of virtuous people, and they shall have none of their reward! There are frightful stories on that subject. Pope St. Gregory the Great himself relates one; he had it from a priest of Isauria (Asia Minor), named Athanasius, who had been an eye-witness of it. "I knew," said that good priest, "I knew in the city of Icona, at the time I was stationed there, a monk who dwelt in the monastery of the Galates, where he was esteemed for his virtue. Every one saw in him a good living man, regular in his whole conduct. But it was found at the end of his life that things were very different in him from what they appeared; for, making a show of fasting with his brethren, he was accustomed to eat in secret, without any one perceiving it. Having fallen sick, and seeing himself near his end, he caused all the monks of the monastery to be assembled; they came with joy, hoping to hear from the

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mouth of this holy man some words of comfort. Alas! they were much mistaken in their expectation, for he was compelled to disclose to them the misfortune wherewith he was threatened. He told them, therefore: 'When you thought I fasted with you, I eat in secret; and for that I am now left a prey to a frightful dragon, who has bound my knees and my feet with his tail, and who, thrusting his head into my mouth, sucks and exhausts all my breath.' Having said these words he died immediately, without the demon he had seen giving him time to escape eternal misery by a sincere repentance."—St. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, B. IV., Ch. 28.

429. *The Sins of St. Ignatius.*—The Saints were so ingenious in practising virtue, that they found motives for it even in the sins of their past life. You can form no idea, dear friends, of the acts of humility, of contrition, of love of God and many other virtues, which this remembrance made them practice. I will take for example St. Ignatius Loyola. It is related in his life that this great Saint, considering his faults and bitterly bewailing them, sometimes conceived the wish that God might punish him for them by depriving him of the sweetness of his consolations, in order that this chastisement might render him more careful and more ardent in his service. "But God was always so merciful towards me," adds the humble priest, "and treated me with so much sweetness, that the more faults I committed and the more I desired to be chastised in this way, the more goodness the

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Lord manifested towards me, and the more abundantly He poured forth upon me the treasures of His infinite bounty." See, dear friends, how virtuous he was; he sometimes said that he did not believe there was in the world a person in whom these two things met to such an excess as in him; the one, offending God so often, and the other, receiving such great favors! Certainly, if a great Saint had such low sentiments with regard to himself, what are we to think of each of ourselves in particular, we who are so far from resembling him in virtue and in merit?—RODRIGUEZ, *Chris. Perf.*, II., 464.

III.—ON MORTAL SIN.

430. *What a Horror St. Louis had of Mortal Sin.*—None of you is unaware, my young friends, that Louis IX. was one of the greatest kings that France has had. But what is most to be admired in his life is that sublime virtue which he knew so well how to practice, notwithstanding the bustle of government and the dangers of the court. One thing must also be admitted, that St. Louis was fortunate in having for a mother the pious Blanche of Castile, who applied herself in a very particular manner to impress deeply on his soul the principles of religion. Amongst the instructions she gave him, she often told him: "My son, you know and God also knows how much I love you; nevertheless, I would rather see you dead at my feet than know you to be guilty of one mortal sin."

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This great king remembered all his life these wise lessons of his mother. One day, I think it was on board the vessel that was taking him to the Holy Land, he asked the Sire de Joinville, his friend, his confidant, and his historian, whether he would rather be a leper or have committed a mortal sin. "By my faith, sire," said he simply and without hesitation, "I would much rather be guilty of thirty mortal sins than be covered with leprosy." "Poor seneschal!" answered St. Louis, his eyes filling with tears of pity, "it is easily seen that you know not what it is to offend God!" Full of these sentiments till his last hour he did all he could to inspire them in the souls of his children. Thus, in the instruction he left as a will, to Philip the Bold, his eldest son, he especially recommended to him to avoid sin. "My son," said he, "beware of offending God, were you even to suffer the greatest torments in the world." Oh! how desirable it would be, children, if the sentiments of that pure and perfect soul were ours even in a small degree!—*Life of St. Louis.*

431. *One Single Mortal Sin!*—One mortal sin suffices to give death to the soul; alas! my very dear children, there are millions of the damned in hell who committed no more. Listen: A young scholar named Hugh passed for a model of wisdom and piety; he frequented the sacraments and did so in an edifying manner. As he was going to church one Sunday morning, to perform his usual devotions, he had the misfortune to meet two of his comrades,

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who were not near as virtuous as himself. They invited him to breakfast with them in one of those houses which are the resort of idleness, and too often even the school of libertinism. He at first loudly protested against going in. They insisted, but he remained firm. They used some degree of violence; he at last went in like Alipus into the amphitheatre, that is to say, he went less than he was dragged in. They sat down to table; he drank at first by force; little by little he began to like it. His reason imperceptibly abandoned him. In this unhappy state, he unfortunately committed a mortal sin. And see, dear friends, how terrible are the judgments of God, how impenetrable His ways! The unfortunate young man is surprised by death; he expired, as if stabbed to the heart, at the very moment when he had committed his sin. His two wretched companions, terrified by a death so tragic, renounced the world, retired into a most austere religious order, there to devote themselves to all the rigors of a penitential life, and to bewail to the end of their days a death so deplorable, the result of their perfidious counsels.—Debussi, *Nouv. Mois de Marie*, 52.

432. *The Prayer of a Child Twelve Years Old.*—It is such a painful thing to be in a state of mortal sin, dear children, that we should rather prefer the death asked for by a young person, scarcely twelve years old. She had made an excellent first communion; she had had the devotion to go to confession before the feast of the Blessed Sacrament. After her confession, the

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Missionary Father to whom she had gone said to her: "My dear child, I think that, by God's mercy, you are pleasing to Him; but you are young, and this country is full of dangers for virtue. Who knows whether you may continue as you are, or whether you may not one day mortally offend the good God? I confess that thought makes me tremble for you."—"Fear not, Father," replied the young Mary, "I would rather die than offend God mortally."—"If that be so, my daughter, I advise you to ask the Blessed Virgin that she may obtain for you the grace to die rather than offend God mortally." Instantly turning towards an image of the Blessed Virgin, that was in the Father's oratory, the child fell prostrate on the ground to honor the Mother of God; she prayed a moment, then said to the missionary: "Father, I hope my holy mother will hear me." She went away very glad, and the Father much edified. Some days after she got a little swelling in her cheek. It was thought at first that such a trifling ailment could have no fatal effect; but it soon turned into a malignant cancer, which, in less than twenty days, eat away one whole cheek, one eye, the half of the nose, the half of the mouth and of the tongue. She endured all this with angelic constancy, and died full of joy, persuaded that her death was the effect of the goodness of God, who vouchsafed to snatch her from the dangers of the world and secure her salvation. A little while before she expired, her aunt, struck with a virtue so extraordinary, took a notion to recommend herself to her prayers.

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The young Mary said nothing, but her aunt saw that she had obtained more than she at first wanted. In fact, that good woman began to lead a new life, and although she was of a strong robust constitution, she died herself in the course of the year.—REVRE, *Anec. Chret.*, 244.

433. *I Have Lost the Grace of My God!*—I heard a story told at a retreat, in 1858, of a young man named Eugene, who well understood the misfortune it is to be guilty of a mortal sin. This poor lad had not had, like you, my dear friends, the advantage of a good education; he was badly brought up, and had received no principles in his early years. After having lived badly for some time, he had the happiness of meeting a good confessor, who drew him out of that sad state and put him in the way of salvation. Eugene was faithful for several months; he courageously withstood all the bad example of some wicked comrades, who endeavored to draw him again into sin. One day, however, after having again resisted courageously, Eugene had the misfortune to give way, and he committed a grave fault. No sooner did he perceive that he had lost the grace of his God, than he began to weep and sob with his whole heart. "My God!" said he, "I have lost Thy grace,—I am in a state of mortal sin!—If I remain in this state, I shall be eternally damned! But I will get out of it, and to that end I promise Thee, yes, I swear to go to confession to the first priest I meet." He arose like the prodigal child and went in search of a priest. An hour after Eu-

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gene had been to confession, received absolution for his sin, was reconciled to God, and had recovered the joy and happiness of a good conscience.—G. S. G.

434. *The Adder-Catcher.*—Of all the anecdotes I have read, dear friends, there is not one, perhaps, that has made more impression on my mind than the following which I read in that charming little book entitled: *Father Bonaventure's Stories and Parables.* A countryman was very expert in catching adders which he sold to an apothecary in Paris to make theriac and other remedies of that kind. One afternoon his hunt was so successful that he caught a hundred and seventeen. In the evening when he returned home, he was so tired and exhausted that he could take no supper. He went up to his room, said his prayers and went immediately to bed. He had previously brought his adders alive into his room, as he was accustomed to do; he put them into a barrel and closed it up, but, perhaps, not carefully enough. In the night, whilst he was asleep, the adders made such a commotion that they forced their prison and escaped from the barrel. The heat of the bed naturally attracted them; they climbed into it, worked themselves in amongst the clothes, and surrounded the poor man without doing him any harm, or even awaking him. Being accustomed to sleep with his arms outside the coverlit, he was strangely surprised, when he awoke next morning, to see them all surrounded with adders. "I am a dead man!" cried he; "the adders have escaped!" He had the pru-

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dence not to stir, for he felt that they were around his neck, and all over his body. What a position! Still he did not lose his presence of mind; but after commending himself to God, he called the servant, taking care not to make the least motion. When the servant opened the door: "Do not come in," said he, "but go down to the kitchen; take the large Dutch oven, half fill it with milk, and warm it so as it will be barely tepid. Then bring it here and set it in the middle of the room, as gently and quietly as you can. Do not close the door, but go quick, and lose not a moment." When the oven, thus prepared, was in the room, the adders, feeling the smell of the warm milk, began to let go their hold. First the peasant saw those of the arms and hands unwinding themselves and making their way towards the milk. He then felt those on the neck, then all the others that were concealed in the sheets and in the quilt, betaking themselves in the same direction. How glad he was then! He kept himself quiet, however, till he had given all the adders time to get out of his bed. Our man then rises very gently, and, seeing that they were glutted, and, as it were, stupified with the milk, he takes them one by one with his nippers and cuts off their head. Then, kneeling down, he thanked God with his whole heart for having delivered him from so great a danger. He goes down, then, and made every one shudder by relating his strange adventure. Sending his hundred and seventeen vipers' heads to the apothecary in Paris, he sends him word that he

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need count no more on him for procuring them in future, because he had given up the trade. In fact, from that day forth he went no more to the forest; he even got such a dislike for adders and vipers that he could not even hear their name mentioned without trembling in every limb. Behold, dear friends, the faithful image of a soul in mortal sin; it is, as it were, surrounded by demons whom it does not see, but whose terrible effects it feels. The very thought of that state ought to make us shudder.—FATHER BONAVENTURE GIRAUDEAU, *Histoires et Parables.*

IV.—ON VENIAL SIN.

435. *A Prophet Killed by a Lion.*—Although venial sin sometimes appears so small a thing to us, dear friends, God and the saints do not consider it so; it is sin, therefore it is a great evil. So the Sacred Scriptures are filled with examples that prove this. It is related in the third book of Kings that God had sent to Jeroboam, King of Israel, a prophet who was truly a man of virtue; he had forbidden him either to eat or drink in the town to which he sent him, that is to say, Bethel. Jeroboam invited him to dine with him, but the prophet refused, in obedience to God's command. As he was going away, another old prophet, who dwelt in Bethel, ran after him and insisted so much that he prevailed on the man of God, notwithstanding all his objections, to go and take some refreshment in his house. To

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overcome his just resistance, he made him believe that he had been warned by an angel of the Lord to bring him home that they might dine together; it was thus hat he deceived him. When they were sitting at able, the Lord foretold to the man of God by the very mouth of his seducer, that his corpse should not be borne to the sepulchre of his fathers, because he had not obeyed God. In fact, as he was returning home, he was met and killed by a lion, which nevertheless, remained near his dead body without touching it more. St. Gregory the Great remarks that the Lord so punished this man of God by a transient pain in the body to preserve his soul in eternity.—III. *Kings*, Chap. 13.

436. *The Little Wine-Bibber.*—Have you ever remarked, children, the stones that are placed under gutters? Although they are very hard, nevertheless the drops of water falling from above in time wear them away. So it is with small sins; they do not kill our body at a blow, but they gradually lead it on to greater crimes. St. Augustine himself relates that his pious mother had allowed herself in her early years to be drawn little by little into a passion for wine. In fact, when her parents, trusting to her sobriety, sent her, according to custom, to fetch wine from the cellar, she could not prevent herself, after having filled the bottle or pitcher, from putting her lips to the edge, to swallow a few drops, not more, because the delicacy of her constitution forbade it. It was not as yet in her a decided passion for that

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treacherous liquor, but she obeyed one of those inordinate motions which the child cannot overcome, and which are the consequence of our evil nature. But as he who despises small things falls by degrees into greater, it soon happened that, adding some drops to what she had taken the day before, she at last contracted the habit of taking wine, and of drinking it with avidity almost by the cupful. A servant, who usually accompanied her to the cellar, being vexed with her one day, reproached her openly with that shameful vice, calling her a *wine-bibber*. This was a cruel sting for St. Monica, who was still very young; she regarded with horror the shameful habit she had contracted, and labored so hard to correct herself of it that she soon lost it entirely.—St. Augustine, *Confessions*, B. IX., Chap. 8.

437. *The Two Sins of St. Louis Gonzaga.*—I remember having assisted, my very dear friends, at a retreat, in the course of which the preacher, to show us that holiness does not precisely consist in never sinning, since the Holy Scripture says that *the just man falleth seven times a day*, amused himself by seeking out the sins committed by some great saints. He told us, amongst others, that St. Louis Gonzaga, when very young, one day took from his father's soldiers a little powder to load the little cannons with which he was playing. This he had taken the opportunity of doing while the soldiers were asleep. Another day he heard them make use of some of those oaths and bad words, which military men do not always scruple,

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as they should; the poor child began to repeat them without clearly understanding their drift. His preceptor having explained to him that these words were bad and not fit to be used, and having also reminded him of the little theft of which we have just spoken, the young Louis de Gonzaga not only corrected himself immediately, but even deplored those faults all his life. They were for him a continual object of repentance, so much so that, every day, he asked pardon of God for them with his whole heart. Behold, my good little friends, the talent of the Saints; they knew how to turn to their spiritual profit even the very faults that escaped their weakness.—G. S. G.

438. *A Nest of Eggs.*—Venial sin is far from being a trifle, my good friends! Who amongst you, if any one offered you a bottle of poison, would drink one drop, then another, then a third, saying: "Oh! that is no great matter, it is but a trifle?" Hear the story of a child of your own age. Auguste Ferron de la Sigonniere, a pupil of the Little Seminary of St. Anne of Auray, in the department of Morbihan, showed on all occasions the liveliest horror of even the smallest faults. On the Holy Saturday of the year 1828, a few days before his death, having gone, notwithstanding his extreme weakness, to visit the poor with his professor and some students of his class, they found in the country a nest in which there were some eggs. The young pupils hastened to take it and divide it amongst them; several proposed to eat those fresh eggs. But some one made the remark that eggs

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were forbidden (which was then the case) during the three last days of Holy Week. Auguste immediately throws away his, saying that he would not for all the gold in the world violate in any way whatever the law of the Church. Thereupon one of the pupils asked if it was more than a venial sin to infringe on the abstinence from eggs. "And if it was only a venial sin," answered Auguste warmly, "I would rather die instantaneously than commit it." Admirable sentiments, dear friends, oh! how happy I would be to see you share them!—*Souvenirs des Petits Seminaires*, 416.

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE CAPITAL SINS.

I.—ON PRIDE AND HUMILITY.

439. *A God Eaten by Worms!*—Pride cast the angels down from heaven. It is a vice so misplaced in man,—who is but a compound of miseries,—that the Lord cannot endure it. And yet, dear friends, there have been men impious enough, audacious enough, coolly to let themselves be saluted by the name of God. Of this number was Herod Agrippa. As he was preparing to make war on the Tyrians and Sidonians, the latter went to him, and having gained over Blastus, who was his chamberlain, they sued for peace, because their country drew its whole subsistence from the lands of this prince. Herod, who was then celebrating public games for the health of the Emperor Claudius, having appointed a day to speak to them, appeared in the theatre the second day of the public sports; he was clad in a royal robe of silver, the dazzling splendor of which was increased by the rays of the sun. Being seated, he publicly harangued the countless multitude present. The flatterers, availing themselves of the opportunity,

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raised their voices and cried: "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man!" That very moment an angel of the Lord struck that impious prince, because, instead of referring the glory to God, he had proudly taken it to himself. He died some days after, eaten by worms. "Woe to me!" he cried in his last moments; "you considered me as a god, and behold I must die! The divine power under which I am obliged to bend confounds all your words, vile flatterers! Alas! why did I listen to you?"

440. *King Canute's Foot-Bath.*—There is a separate race of men, children, whose words are always dangerous, whose judgments always false, for they call that which is evil good, and that which is good evil; they are called flatterers. The more elevated any one's dignity is, the more he is exposed to become their victim. Hear what is related of Canute, King of England. The piety of that prince preserved him always from the poison of flattery, so fatal to a great many others. One day he happened to be on the sea-shore; one of his courtiers, hoping to ingratiate himself with him, affected to give him the title of King of kings, adding that he ruled the land and the sea. Canute, making no answer, folded his cloak, laid it as near the waves as he could, then sat down upon it. After which, seeing the sea rising little by little because of the tide, he addressed it in a tone of authority: "Know that thou art subject to my orders; I, therefore, command thee to respect thy master and come no nearer to him." Every one

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was in a state of expectation. The waves soon flowed over the king's feet, giving him a slight salt-water bath. Turning then to these flatterers, he told them with much wisdom and good sense: "You see how I am master of the sea! Learn by this the limits of kingly power; God who created the sea, and the land, and all the elements, can alone control them!—FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, II., 109.

441. *A Shepherd Becomes Pope.*—It is not rare to see celebrated men who came from the lowest ranks of society; but what is sometimes seen, too, dear friends, is that those men when so elevated have the foolish vanity of denying their origin. Nothing is more contemptible in the eyes of every one. Sixtus the Fifth, who from a simple shepherd became a Pope, did not act thus, he never forgot the meanness of his former state, and more than once he humbled the pride of certain courtiers. A good Franciscan friar one day begged that his family might have the honor of being allied to his. "I willingly consent," answered Sixtus V., "provided we observed some proportion between your family and mine. Tell me first what is your origin?"—"Oh! most Holy Father," replied the monk, "my house is, thank God, one of the richest and most ancient in the kingdom of Naples."—"So much the worse for your purpose," the Pope immediately answered, "for how could an alliance be made between a rich and powerful noble like you and a poor swineherd such as I? However, if you will have me, at any cost, consent to what you ask, lay aside your

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religious habit, give up to an hospital the good pension you receive from your family, and go keep the animals I have mentioned in the country, for five or six months, as I did myself in my youth." You see, my young friends, that an answer so humble and so modest closed the mouth of the poor religious, at the same time that it filled him still more with admiration for the Sovereign Pontiff.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, IV., 27.

442. *The Relics of a Living Saint.*—If ever you wish to know a prelate at once learned, pious, charitable and modest, read, dear friends, the life of M. d'Orleans de la Mothe, bishop of Amiens, who lived a little before the great Revolution. The inhabitants of a parish which he had evangelized before being a bishop, saw him depart with regret; they accompanied him to Aix, in Provence, whither he went to render an account of his mission to the Archbishop. That prelate, apprised of the happy fruits he had obtained, began to give him the praises due to his zeal, and to felicitate him on the good he had effected. The holy missionary interrupted him then with these words: "Say as you will, my lord, I have not made your diocesans all I should; I have not even been able to teach them not to strip the passers by. See in what a state they have put me!" He spoke thus because, through veneration for him, the people had cut up his cloak and soutane, as it were to make relics of them. "You jest, my lord," he added, "in saying that they regard me as a Saint; you

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must observe that whereas offerings are made to Saints, people here strip them of what they have. It is an abuse of which your lordship ought to correct these people of yours." Thus it was that by some adroit jesting he warded off the praises that were being given him. He used the same address in answering some one who spoke to him of the people's eagerness to have pieces of his garments: "I know not," said he, "what these good people propose to themselves in doing so; all I know is that this devotion keeps me rather chilly."—REYRE, *Anec. Chret.*, 312.

443. *A Pious Queen's Examination of Conscience.*—France, you know, children, has had few queens as sincerely virtuous as Mary Leczinska, wife of Louis XV. One evening, before going to bed, she began to accuse herself, as was her custom, of some imperfections which she resisted, she said, but very feebly, since she had not yet corrected herself. She reproached herself especially with often wanting charity towards her neighbor, and speaking of persons a little too disparagingly. Three of her women were with her at the moment. Two of these ladies assured her that they had never heard her say anything that was not according to the exact rules of Christian charity. "As for me," said the youngest, "I think the Queen is right, and has more than one reason to reproach herself in this respect." The others loudly protested against an accusation which appeared to them as unjust as it was impertinent. But the pious Mary Leczinska taking up the defence of her on whom they

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would have imposed silence, said to her in the most cheerful and engaging tone: "Courage, courage, my daughter; do not mind them, but tell me frankly all you think."—"Since your Majesty will give me leave," continued the young maid of honor, "I must say that you are often wanting in justice."—"Alas! I feared as much," replied the good princess; "in spite of us we are made to do wrong." The lady, addressing herself then to her companions, said in a confidential way: "Will you not admit, ladies, that what the Queen so often tells us of herself, for example what she has just been telling us now, is absolutely untrue? The Queen is, then, wanting in justice." At these words, I leave you to imagine the surprise of the Queen and the other ladies; this pious princess could not help blushing at a reproach so singular, and permitted no further conversation.—REYRE, *Anec. Chret.*, 339.

II.—AVARICE AND GENEROSITY.

444. *Thy Money Perish with Thee!*—Cupidity, or the love of money, my friends, is the source of such a great number of other sins, that we cannot take too much care to preserve ourselves from it. The first Christians, and afterwards the monks and solitaries, avoided it most carefully. I have read several examples of this in the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert. Thus, St. Jerome relates that, amongst the solitaries who lived in the deserts of Nitria, not far from

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Alexandria, in Egypt, and who supported themselves by manual labor, there was one who had a desire to amass some money. He began, then, to work unremittingly at spinning flax; as he eat very little, he succeeded in saving up a hundred crowns, and at last he died. When they went into his cell to take his body out for interment, they found this money, and immediately all the solitaries, nearly five thousand in number, some of them living a long way off, assembled to see what had best be done in such a contingency, and to what use they would apply this money, which appeared to them accursed, because it had been acquired through a sentiment of cupidity. Some were of opinion that it should be distributed amongst the poor, others that it should be given to the Church, others that it should be sent to the relatives of the deceased, who were, perhaps, in need of it. But the great St. Macarius, the holy Abbot Pambo, the holy Abbot Isidore, and some others of the elders, were of none of these opinions. Inspired by the Holy Ghost, they said that the money should be buried with the dead, and at the same time these words, which St. Peter said of old to Simon the Magician, be pronounced over the body: *Thy money perish with thee!* Their advice was followed, and this example struck a salutary terror into every mind.—Père Marin, *Vies des Pères des Déserts.*

445. *St. Melania's 300 Pounds of Silver.*—Alms should be entirely disinterested, my friends! if possible, it should be known to God alone. It is not a

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good custom then to have people's names and address inscribed on subscription lists, as is too often seen. The blessed Melania having heard the great virtues of the holy Abbot Pambo much spoken of, brought him three hundred pounds of silver plate, and besought him, that receiving it, he might share with her the great riches God had given him. The holy abbot was then occupied in making cords of palm branches. "Generous soul," said he, continuing his labor and without raising his eyes, "may God reward your charity!" Then turning to his steward, he added: "Take this offering and distribute it amongst the poorest monasteries of Libya and the islands." Meanwhile St. Melania waited till St. Pambo should give her his blessing, and pay her some compliment in return for so rich a present. But seeing, nothing of all that, she made bold to say: "Father I am very glad to tell you, for, perhaps, you may not know it, that what I have given you amounts to 300 pounds of silver." The holy abbot, without making the least sign, or so much as casting his eyes on the baskets which contained those precious vessels, answered: "My daughter, He to whom you have made this present does not need to be told how much it is worth, since He who weighs even the mountains and the stars in His divine balance cannot be ignorant of the weight of your silver. If it were to me you gave it, it would be right for you to make me acquainted with its value; but as you have offered it to God, who did not disdain to accept two oboles from

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the hands of the widow in the Gospel, and held them as of more account than the richest gifts, speak no more of it, my daughter: He will reward you."—Père Marin, *Vies des Pères des Déserts.*

446. *The Old Doublet of a Saint.*—As you have often been told, children, we must be severe to ourselves and indulgent to others. Christian charity goes farther yet; it deprives itself of many things in order to give to those who are in need. In this connection it is related that St. Thomas of Villanova, a Spanish archbishop, one day sent his old doublet to a pious seamstress to mend the sleeves which were quite worn out. She made him remark that his doublet was so old, so bad, that it was not worth even the trouble of mending, and that it would be better to make a new one. "I am not of your opinion," replied the archbishop; "if there are new sleeves put in it, it will do me a while longer; with the money a new one would cost me, I can assist at least some poor persons." He accordingly sent for a tailor and asked him how much a new pair of sleeves would cost. The tailor takes his measure, chooses his stuff, and names his price. "It is too dear," said St. Thomas, "you must take something off it." The tailor agreed, but went away dissatisfied, and did not scruple to tell every one that the archbishop was a niggard and a miser. It so happened that this poor tailor had three daughters to marry, and not much to give any of them. His confessor advised him to go and see St. Thomas, whose generosity he praised.

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"Catch me going to him!" cried the penitent, and immediately he told the story of the doublet. With much persuasion the worthy priest induced him to go. The archbishop recognized him at once, heard him kindly, took the names of his daughters, and made inquiries as to their conduct. Hearing only what was good of them, he sent for the tailor and told him: "My friend, are not you the tailor who put sleeves in my doublet? I know you were not pleased with me on that occasion; you thought I was too niggardly. Well! it is by saving a little here and a little there that I am enabled to do some little charity. Here are three purses, each containing fifty pieces of silver, to help you to settle your daughters decently." I leave you to think, dear friends, whether the tailor did not change his opinion in regard to St. Thomas of Villanova.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 444.

447. *I Cannot! I Cannot!*—The Holy Scripture somewhere says, my dear friends, that there is nothing more wicked than an avaricious man, because he is ready to sell his soul for money. Alas! Judas the traitor is a proof of this. But here is another example that will also strike you, and convince you how much the avaricious man imperils his own salvation. A priest was one day requested by the relatives of a miser, whose recovery was despaired of, to go and exhort him to make his confession, which he had not done for at least thirty years. The zealous minister of God went accordingly, and did all he possibly could

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to persuade him; but the miser, instead of hearing him with the attention which a thing so important deserved, continually interrupted him with silly questions such as these concerning his business: "Tell me now, reverend sir, you that come from the city, how is pepper selling to-day? is wool going up, or down? where is prime sugar to be got? are provisions plenty in the market?" Thus it was that the questions followed each other in quick succession, notwithstanding the efforts of the priest, who urged him to apply himself to more serious thoughts. At last, seeing his efforts of no avail, he was forced to tell him plainly that his salvation was in extreme danger, and that, far from busying himself with colonial, or other produce, he would do much better to think of making a good confession. When the miser heard these words, he began to cry out—"Let me alone, father, I cannot! I cannot! I cannot!" and in a few moments after he died, in a fit of the deepest despair.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 81.

448. *The Miser Buried Alive.*—Almost all stories of misers are tragical stories, my very dear friends!—Here is one that you will never forget. It is related that a man, I do not now remember in what city, being possessed of the demon of avarice, thought only of heaping up goods on goods, wealth on wealth. As he feared that his treasures might be taken from him, he had a subterranean place made under his cellar with an iron door, concealed so artfully that no one could perceive it, There, as soon as he had re-

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ceived any money, he went to hide it away, and contemplated at leisure his gold and silver, of which he made his god. One day when he had brought a considerable sum of money to this gloomy den, he forgot to take his key and keep it by him; he closed the door on himself and began to count his heaped up treasures. When he had counted them over and over, he would have gone away; but the door could not be opened from within, so he found himself shut in and unable to get out; you may imagine the horrible situation in which he found himself at that fatal moment. It would seem that he shouted, and knocked a long time; but who could hear him, or who would have thought of looking for him in such a place? Meanwhile the man having disappeared, his family, as may be supposed, were terribly alarmed. They searched, and had others search on every side, without being able to hear any tidings of him; he was supposed to have made away with himself, or been murdered, in a word, that he had perished by some fatal accident. In this interval of time, a locksmith, hearing of the event, remembered that this miser had once ordered him to make secretly an iron door with a spring lock, and began to think that it might have happened, by some mistake, that he had shut himself in. He made the thing known, and led the way to the spot where he had secretly placed this door. It was broken in. What was the astonishment, horror and fright of all beholders when they saw the body of this man all putrified and eaten by

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worms! It was all plain then; the place was searched, and immense sums were found accumulated, real treasures of wrath and malediction, to appear before the dread tribunal of God.—BAUDRAND, *Histoires Edifiantes.*

III.—ON LUST AND CHASTITY.

449. *The Devil's Secret.*—Speaking of bad thoughts, let me tell you, my dear friends, a very curious circumstance which occurred to a good solitary of the sixth century, I think. He lived on the very Mount of Olives, and had no other ornament in his humble cell than a little image of the Blessed Virgin. Full of devotion for that good Mother, he passed the greater part of the day in reciting his Office, or other prayers, at her feet. Notwithstanding that, he had the grief of seeing himself tormented by a multitude of bad thoughts and unchaste images, which scarcely left him any rest, either night or day. He was the more astonished at this, that he never had anything to reproach himself with, and that his age, already advanced, as well as his austerities and daily prayers, ought to have placed him beyond the reach of such assaults. One day, after having prayed and wept much before his little statue of Mary, he took it into his head to address the fiend himself and say to him: "Impure spirit, why is it that you do not leave me a moment quiet?"—"Be assured," said the devil, who appeared to him at the same moment, "be assured

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the torments I cause you are nothing to those which you make me endure. Now! if you swear to keep my secret, I will tell you what you must do if you would have me leave you at rest." The good solitary without suspecting anything, and in the great desire which he had to be delivered from those bad thoughts, gave the devil the promise he demanded. Then that infernal spirit told him: "*If you want me to let you alone, you have only to look no more at that image you have in your cell.*" Imagine the astonishment of this poor religious! His troubled conscience immediately reproached him with the imprudent promise he had made, and the sad consequences it must have. To reassure himself, he went to the Abbot Theodore, who was the Superior of all the Solitaries of Mount Olivet, and simply told him his business. The pious abbot made him understand that an oath of that kind made to the devil did not bind him, and that all he had to do was to go on praying to the Blessed Virgin. Full of joy at this consoling answer, the solitary returned to his cell, and continued his exercises of piety as before. Astonishing to relate, at the end of a few days, overcome by his perseverance and his pious devotion to Mary, the devil left off tormenting him with bad thoughts, and the solitary lived happily to a good old age.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, VI., 182.

450. *A Duke of Champagne Killed by a Young Girl.*—Chastity is a good so precious to the heart, dear friends, that God has sometimes inspired weak

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women with the courage of the lion, to help them to preserve their honor. We have a fine example of this in the history of Judith, which you know by heart. Here is another which you do not know. Amalon, Duke of Champagne, having carried off a maiden of noble family, as remarkable for virtue as for other fine qualities, strove to seduce her and lead her to evil. This generous girl at first resisted him only by her prayers and tears; but seeing that all was in vain, she throws herself on Amalon, seizes his sword and inflicts upon him a wound that must necessarily prove mortal. The duke did not die immediately; he called his people, and before he breathed his last, found strength to say: "Harm not this courageous girl; it was I that sinned, seeking to deprive her of her honor and virtue; what she did deserves respect rather than punishment." The noble damsel, retaining all her presence of mind, escapes amid the confusion which she had caused, travels many miles on foot, and goes to ask pardon of King Gontran, who was then at Châlon-sur-Saône. That prince received her with much kindness, took her under his protection, and forbade the duke's family to seek to avenge a death which his odious attempt had but too well deserved.—Filassier, *Dict. d'Educ.*, I., 596.

451. *The Power of the "Hail Mary."*—Of all the virtues for which we can implore the assistance of the Most Holy Virgin, there is none, dear friends, that pleases her more than chastity. Hence we are sure

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that she will always hear the prayers which we address to her with that intention. One *Hail Mary* will do more than the best resolutions. A young man, who had often to reproach himself with great sins against the holy virtue, but who wished sincerely to correct himself, went to Rome to go to confession. He applied to Father Segneri, a Jesuit, and declared to him that this habit had become almost insurmountable to him. But the learned religious exhorted him to take refuge in the heart of Mary, and simply gave him for penance to recite a *Hail Mary* every morning till his next confession. The young man faithfully followed this advice; he recited that short prayer very punctually every day, and ceased not to address himself confidently to the Blessed Virgin. Soon after he was obliged to undertake a long voyage. On his return, he went to see Father Segneri, his confessor, and the latter had the satisfaction of seeing that he was completely cured of his evil habit. "How did you manage, my dear child, to correct yourself as you have done?"—"Father, I am indebted for it to the Blessed Virgin; she had regard to the little prayer I said every day in her honor, and that simple *Hail Mary*, which I never missed saying, merited for me of her Divine Son the precious grace for which I will eternally thank Him."—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 109.

Napoleon's Statue.—I never saw the Emperor Napoleon the First more indignant than on the occasion of which I am going to speak. It will show you, my young friends, how far that great man carried the

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love of decency. The celebrated sculptor, Canova, had been employed to make his statue; he unluckily represented him in the form of a heathen deity, the god mars, holding in his hand a little statue of victory. The whole was of white marble, somewhat more than life size, and of admirable workmanship. As soon as it was finished, it was sent to Paris, and was placed in one of the lower halls of the Louvre, awaiting the Emperor's inspection. The better to bring out the whiteness of the marble, and to give it a warm flesh-like hue, care had been taken to hang the hall with red drapery. These preparations finished, the Emperor hastened to go and see Canova's new masterpiece. But scarcely had he entered when he almost started back with horror: "What insolence is this?" cried he, addressing M. Denon, the Director of the Imperial Museum; "how had any one the impudence to represent me in such a way as that? I will never allow that statue to be exposed to public view. What would any decent family say, seeing the rules of decency and propriety so violated? Canova is mistaken; the beauty of his work is effaced by its indignity. I do not want to have this vile thing destroyed, but you shall hide it under a veil, and I forbid it to be shown to any one whatever, and for the future I will not have a word said of it in the papers." Do you not admire with me, my friends, this just indignation of the Emperor? Never forget that the eternal laws of God must never yield to the egotistical considerations of art, interest, or human respect.—FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, II., 436.

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IV.—ON ENVY AND CHARITY.

453. *The Two Rival Painters Without Jealousy.*—It is very rare, my friends, to see two men of equal talent who are not jealous one of the other. I have, however, found an example of the contrary in the history of Greece. Protogenes, a famous painter, lived at Rhodes; he was only known to the celebrated Apelles, likewise a painter, by reputation and by the fame of his pictures. Apelles, wishing at last to assure himself of the beauty of his works, went on purpose to Rhodes. Arrived at the house of Protogenes, he found there only an old woman who kept her master's studio, and a picture on the easel, on which there was as yet nothing of paint. The old woman asked his name. "I am going to put it here," replied Apelles; and taking a pencil with color, he sketched something with extreme delicacy. Protogenes, on his return, having learned what had passed, and regarding the sketch with admiration, was not long in divining the author. "It must be Apelles!" he cried; "no one else could draw a sketch so fine and so light!" Then, seizing himself another pencil with a different color, he drew on the same features a contour more correct and more delicate, and told his old servant that if the stranger returned she had only to show him what he had just done, telling him at the same time that it was the work of the man he came to seek. It was done as he said; but Apelles, ashamed of seeing himself outdone by his competitor, took a third color, and amongst the lines that had been

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drawn, he traced others with such marvellous skill that he exhausted all the subtlety of his art. Protogenes having distinguished these last lines: "I am conquered," said he, "and I must hasten to embrace my rival and my conqueror." So he flew to the port of Rhodes, and having there found Apelles, he formed with him a close friendship, which was never after interrupted.—A rare example, children, especially between two persons of the same merit, and running the same career. It were to be wished, for the honor of the fine arts, that artists would oftener renew it.—FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, I., 102.

454. *How Michael Angelo Confounded His Enemies.*—The best answer that can be made to the jealous and the envious, children, is to confound them, whether by always doing what is right, or putting it out of their power to do better. Here is a very curious example of this. Michael Angelo, that celebrated painter and sculptor of Florence, having remarked, during his stay in Rome, the jealousy he had inspired in Raphael and several other artists, composed privately a *Bacchus playing with a Satyr.* He had spared nothing to make this piece of sculpture worthy of his well-known skill; but he took care to conceal his name at the bottom and to break off an arm of his statue; after these precautions he blackened it with soot and buried it in a vineyard where he knew the foundations of a house were soon to be dug out. Nearly a year after, the workmen employed on these foundations, having actually dis-

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covered this unknown statue, carried it to the Pope. The artists all praised the magnificence of this work, and immediately agreed on its high antiquity. Michael Angelo alone seemed to be of a contrary opinion; he even began to point out numerous defects in this masterpiece. The question gave rise to warm discussion. Raphael maintained that the statue was perfection itself, and that it was impossible to estimate its price; "only," he added, "it is a great pity that its arm is broken off and lost." Then, in order to confound this jealous rival, Michael Angelo went in search of the arm he had kept, showed his name engraved on the base of the statue, and related its origin. His enemies went away quite confused for having fallen so completely into the snare so adroitly laid for them by Michael Angelo. Those poor artists drew only shame from a fact which sheds imperishable glory on their rival.—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 334.

455. *Two Envious Soldiers Reconciled.*—People may sometimes forget themselves, dear friends, and have little difficulties with their neighbor; but religion does not permit us to remain in that sad state, and obliges us to be reconciled as soon as possible. At the siege of Namur, in 1695, there were in the army of William III., King of England, two men of Hamilton's regiment, one a sub-officer, named Union, the other a private soldier, called Valentine. They became irreconcilable enemies. Union, who was Valentine's officer, took every opportunity of annoy-

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ing him, and showing his aversion. The soldier bore all without complaining; or, at least, if he did sometimes groan under this tyranny, he never forgot the blind obedience prescribed by military laws. Several months had passed in this way, when one day they were both ordered out for the attack on the Castle of Namur. The French made a sally, in which the officer Union received a shot in the thigh. He fell, and as the French were pressing the allied troops on every side, he expected to be trampled under foot. At this moment he had recourse to his enemy: "Ah! Valentine! Valentine!" cried he, "can you desert me?" Hearing his voice, Valentine ran hastily to him, and, in the midst of the French fire, he raised the officer on his shoulders, and carried him courageously through every danger: they became friends. Arrived at the Abbey of Salsine, a cannon ball, without touching the wounded officer, killed poor Valentine, who fell under the body of his enemy. The latter then forgetting his wound, gets up, tearing his hair, and throwing himself on the disfigured corpse of his deliverer: "Ah! Valentine," cried he, "dear Valentine, was it, then, for me you died? for me, who treated you with so much barbarity? Generous man! I cannot and will not survive you! No!" It was impossible to separate him from the mangled body. At last he was taken away, still holding fast by his dear benefactor, and whilst both were thus carried into the ranks, their comrades, who all knew their former relations, wept at once with admiration

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and sorrow. When Union was brought back to his tent, his wound was dressed by force; but the following day the unhappy man, still calling on Valentine, died overwhelmed with regret and full of gratitude. Behold, dear friends, what Christian charity can do: it forgives and devotes itself.—FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, II., 452.

456. *A Merchant's Good Fortune.*—Our Lord has said, my very dear children, that we must not only forget the injuries our neighbor may have done us, but even do good to those who have done evil to us. It is evidently religion alone that could make that sublime law. Two merchants of Marseilles, who were neighbors and jealous of each other's prosperity, lived in scandalous enmity. At the end of some months, one of the two, entering at last into himself, heard the voice of religion, which condemned his conduct, and wished to be reconciled. For that he consulted a person of piety in whom he had full confidence, as to what he should do in order to bring about this reconciliation. "The best means," answered this prudent adviser, "is that which I am going to point out to you. When people come to buy of you if you do not happen to have what suits them, instead of letting them go without saying anything, direct them to your neighbor's store." He did so for some time. And what was the consequence? The other merchant, apprised of where all these buyers came from, was struck with the good offices of the man whom he considered as his enemy. He went to

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thank him, begged him with tears in his eyes to forgive him for the hatred he had borne him, and entreated him to receive him into the number of his best friends. You may easily imagine, my dear children, that his request was granted; those two neighbors, who were sworn enemies but a few weeks before, became the model of sincere and cordial friendship. The whole neighborhood was edified.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, IV., 93.

V.—ON GLUTTONY AND SOBRIETY.

457. *What Happens When You Have Drank?*—The pagans, themselves, my very dear children, had a horror of drunkenness. There is no more curious example of this than the young Cyrus. It is Xenophon who, in his book of the Cyropedia, relates the singular impression made on that young man by the sight of several drunken persons. He had obtained from King Astyages, his grandfather, permission to offer him to drink at table, promising that he would acquit himself with as good a grace as the prince's cupbearer. "I am pleased with you, my son," said Astyages to him on the morrow, "no one could serve better; only as you wish to imitate Sacas, my cupbearer, why did you not taste the wine before you poured it out for us?"—"Oh!" answered the young prince with much simplicity, "that was because I was afraid there was poison in that liquor; for at the banquet you gave to the great lords of the court, on

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the anniversary of your birth, I saw clearly that Sacas had poisoned you."—"How so?"—"Why, I perceived that as soon as a little of that liquor was drank, it turned the heads of all the guests. I saw you doing things that you would not pardon in children, crying out at once without hearing one another, then singing all together in the most ridiculous way; and when one of you sang a *solo*, you swore, before you had even heard him, that he sang admirably well. Each of you boasted of his strength, but when you came to rise from table, far from being able to make a single step in advance, you could not even keep yourselves firm on your feet. In a word, you seemed to have forgotten, you, that you were a king, and they, that they were your subjects."—"Tell me, then," said Astyages, "does not the same thing sometimes happen to your father?"—"Never," answered Cyrus.—"What happens to him, then, when he has drank?"—"When he has drank, he is no longer thirsty, and that is all." Admirable conversation, is it not, dear friends? Let us turn it to account, to avoid, not only the shameful excesses of wine, but all other passions, which tend but to degrade and brutalize us.—ROLLIN, *Ancient History*, II., 146.

458. *The Bunch of Grapes in a Desert.*—Of all the examples of penance and mortification found in the admirable Lives of the Fathers of the Desert, I think there are few, my friends, so remarkable as that which I am about to relate. A celebrated solitary of Alexandria, St. Macarius, one day received a present of a

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magnificent bunch of grapes. Instead of eating it, he hastened to carry it to one of his brethren, who dwelt in the same desert, thinking that, as he was weaker than he, he had also more need of being refreshed by that beneficent fruit. The brother thanked him much for it, and appeared touched by this mark of attention; but, scarce had Macarius gone forth from his cell, when he hastened with it to another solitary, in order to give him an agreeable surprise. The grapes had not yet reached their final destination, for they passed on to a fourth religious, and successively to several others, so that they went through almost every cell in the desert. Finally, the last to whom it was given, not knowing that it had already passed through the hands of Macarius, had a wish to offer it to him, and in fact brought it to him, pressing him very urgently to eat it. Macarius, who had at once recognized the bunch of grapes, learning, after some inquiries, how much it had travelled, thanked the Lord in the depth of his heart for the grace he had given his brethren, of knowing thus how to profit by every occasion they met to practise penance, and also charity one towards the other. He was so touched by this admirable trait that he preferred to let the grapes wither, rather than lose the merit he had had in depriving himself of them.—Père Marin, *Vies des Père des Déserts.*

459. *The Fury of a Drunkard of Hippo.*—Nothing shows better the horrors to which drunkenness may lead, my friends, than what happened in Africa in the

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time of St. Augustine. A young man of Hippo, named Cyril, was extremely addicted to wine; he even spent great part of his time in the taverns with his profligate companions. One day, when he had given himself up to all the excesses of that ignoble passion, he returned home, and, urged on by a blind fury, he threw himself on one of his sisters and stabbed her. Hearing her cries the father ran, but the son, more furious still, imbrued his hands in the blood of him who had given him life and slew him. He also poignarded another of his sisters who tried to defend her father and save him from the hands of that raving madman, or, rather, that execrable monster. St. Augustine, soon apprised of these atrocities, and, although he had already preached twice that day, assembled his people and a third time ascended the pulpit, to make known to his hearers the crimes just committed by that miserable drunkard, who ought never to have seen the light. At the recital of what had happened, the whole assembly uttered cries of horror, and piteous groans. They could not understand how a man could be led to commit so many and such barbarous crimes. St. Augustine profited by the occasion to show the excesses to which an unhappy life may lead. Let us instruct ourselves in his school, dear friends, and tremble for fear of ever abandoning ourselves to the shameful excesses of gluttony or drunkenness.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, IV., 113.

460. *Tragical Death of the Emperor Zeno.*—Of all

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the deaths of which I ever heard, the most frightful was that of Zeno, Emperor of Constantinople. That prince dishonored his dignity by a shameful inclination to drunkenness. The disorderly life he led brought on a disease, which, every time he became intoxicated, assumed proportions more and more terrific. On the night of the 9th April, 491, having risen from table, drunk as usual, he had an attack of epilepsy, so violent that he fell back apparently lifeless. The officers of his palace took him for dead and immediately informed his wife, the Empress Ariana. Happy to have got rid in a natural way of a husband who had become a burden to her, at the dawn of day she caused his body to be secretly conveyed to the royal vault. She placed guards there and forbade them expressly to let any one in or even to open the door, if they came to hear any noise within. Scarcely twenty-four hours had passed when the guards heard cries and groans in the interior of the tomb. It was Zeno, who was thought dead, coming to himself again. As soon as he found that he was in the imperial vaults, he began to utter lamentable cries. But his tears and cries touched no one, the door remained closed, for it is likely that the guards had been bribed by the Empress. When the vault was entered some time after, it was found that the Emperor had, in despair, torn his right arm with his teeth, and that he had eaten one of his boots, till death came to put an end to his torments. It is thus, dear friends, that our passions, if we do not endeavor

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to combat them, will work our eternal ruin, after having already caused us many miseries and sorrows in this life.—LEBEAU, *Histoire du Bas Empire*, III.

461. *Sobriety of a King of Sicily and Arragon.*—The Spartans, and, in general, all the peoples of Greece, were renowned for their sobriety. It is to be remarked, my friends, that the simple and frugal life is almost always accompanied by valor and wisdom, whilst what is called the pleasures of the table usually denote a common intelligence. Here is one proof amongst a thousand: Napoleon the Great breakfasted in ten minutes and dined in twenty. Alfonso, king of Sicily and Arragon, was asked why he did not drink wine, and why, when he chanced to take it, he put so much water in it. "That is not the custom with kings," the speaker added, "nor those who surround them." "I know that well," he replied, "but they are, doubtless, unaware that wine eclipses wisdom, and that that treacherous liquor, taken without moderation, extinguishes that fire of the mind, that energy of the soul, which maintain the dignity of a king, and render him worthy of bearing the name." "Drunkenness," said he to another lord, who had put the same question to him, "drunkenness is the mother of fury, of impurity and many other vices, all of which should be banished from the heart and the palace of princes." One day Alfonso encamped on the banks of a river, a short distance from the enemy; night was approaching; the army, destitute of provisions, had taken nothing since the

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morning. He himself was as hungry as his men. Then one of his officers brought him a piece of bread, a large black radish and a little cheese. Under existing circumstances that would have been a delicious repast. "I thank you much," said the prince to the officer, "but I will wait till after the victory, for I cannot fare better than my brave soldiers."—FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, I., 4.

462. *A Glutton Cured by His Own Enemy.*—The good cheer which gluttons seek with so much eagerness is, alas! for them a source of disease and infirmity, unknown to sober and temperate persons. I am going, my friends, to quote a somewhat singular example of this. A man of high birth, who dwelt, I think, in Tuscany, suffered horribly from a species of gout, which tortured his legs and feet. Having become the enemy of a countryman of his by some offence he had given him, the latter vowed vengeance against him. On a fine morning in spring, as our invalid's pains were somewhat less than usual, he took a fancy to make a little excursion in the neighborhood. But, at the moment when he least expected it, he saw disguised men approaching, who laid hold of him roughly, dragged him away, and shut him up in a small chamber at the top of a very high tower. There, for three or four years, he received no other nourishment than dry bread and water. When his parents and friends, after searching everywhere, at length discovered the place of his retreat, they hastened to set him free. They found

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him in perfect health; not a trace remained of his former malady · his enemy, by making him observe a strict regimen, had been his best physician. A new proof, dear friends, that good living is more fatal to the body than penance and mortification.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 379.

VI.—ON ANGER AND MEEKNESS.

463. *The Portrait of a Furious Man.*—It is not only religion, my friends, that condemns in us the excesses of the passions; reason, good sense, medicine itself, have but one voice to tell us how wrong it is, physically and morally, when one gives way to their vicious inclinations. Galen, one of the most celebrated physicians of antiquity, relates that while still young, he one day saw a man running hastily to open a door with a key he held in his hand. As he could not manage to do it, because that, by his haste and roughness, he had got the key embarrassed in the lock, he fell into such a fury, that he began to bite the key with his teeth, and wanted to kick the door open. He then began to blaspheme, foaming at the mouth; his eyes were so inflamed with rage that they seemed ready to start from their sockets. "That sight," added the celebrated physician who relates the fact, "that sight gave me so great a horror of anger, and so great a dread of falling into such a state, that I have never since allowed myself to be angry at anything."—Let us be no less wise than a pagan, my

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friends, we who have under our eyes such numerous examples of mildness and patience.—Rodriguez, *Chris. Perfec.*, III., 62.

464. *The Good and Bad Woman of Alexandria.*—Not only, dear friends, must we never allow ourselves to be angry, but we must bear patiently with those who have an ill-temper; that is truly virtue. A pious lady of Alexandria had requested St. Athanasius to give her a poor widow, whom she might feed and support, and so have an opportunity of exercising charity. The holy patriarch ordered one to be chosen from amongst those whom the Church took care of on account of their infirmities and their poverty. Next day the lady received into her house one of those widows; but she did not suit her, just because she was modest, mild, and full of gratitude for the kind cares bestowed upon her. Then the lady went back to the holy prelate, and told him that he had not given her such a person as she required. The Saint entered into her thought, and promised to serve her to her liking. He caused search to be made for another widow less amiable than the first, and the historian who relates the fact says that it was not hard to find her. This woman was talkative, ill-tempered, impertinent, and so wicked even that she only returned insults for the services rendered her. Every day she ceased not to complain of her charitable benefactress, and abuse her in every way; sometimes she had even the wickedness to strike her. But, behold the heroism of virtue. After a certain time

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the lady had occasion to see St. Athanasius, and she thanked him for having granted her what she desired. "Oh! Father," said she, "how much you have served me! The widow you have given me to support at least exercises my patience and humility, whereas the former one was so mild and so grateful that I lost all the merit of my good works."—LASSAUSE, *Explic. du Cat. de l'Empire*, 373.

465.—*The Sun is Near Setting.*—The Saints are men like others, dear friends; they may, therefore, commit faults; but how well they know how to repair them! It is said in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: *Let not the sun go down on thine anger.* It was according to this precept that the Saint of whom I am going to tell you comported himself. St. John the Almoner, patriarch of Alexandria, who died in 616, had a contest one day with the Senator Nicetas. The subject of their dispute was that Nicetas wished to have places in the markets disposed of for the profit of the public treasury, whereas St. John the Almoner would have the revenues employed for the relief of the poor. They had a great dispute thereon in private, and separated at eleven o'clock in mutual displeasure. The holy patriarch, having ever before his eyes the precept by which God forbids anger, was sorry for this accident; and, to remedy the evil, he sent at five o'clock an archpriest, accompanied by an ecclesiastic, to tell the senator from him: *The sun is near setting.* Nicetas was so struck by this, that, melting into tears, he went immediately to the holy

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patriarch, who said to him: "Welcome, O true child of the Church! for having so promptly obeyed the voice of thy Mother!" They knelt down, one before the other, mutually embraced, and having arisen, sat down together. Then St. John the Almoner said to the senator: "I assure you if I had only perceived that you were very angry, I would not have failed to go and see you."—"I protest to you, Father, that I will never again listen to those who would engage me in disputes and contentions."—"Believe me, my son and my brother, if we allow ourselves to be persuaded by such persons, we shall render ourselves guilty of many sins." He added that, in order to prevent himself from being surprised into anger, he had resolved within himself to take time to decide, and had found himself in the right. Nicetas heard these words with respect, with the intention of profiting by them, and thus separated in peace from the holy patriarch.—LEONTIUS, *Life of St. John the Almoner.*

466. *Must One be a Lion to the Wicked?*—The world has singular maxims; but, dear friends, those maxims are contrary to the Gospel; therefore, they must not be followed, for it is by the Gospel that we shall be judged. It was thus that the saints did. St. Elzéar, who flourished in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, entered, after the death of his father, into possession of the earldom of Ariano, situate in the kingdom of Naples. The people, who were devoted to the house of Arragon, and opposed to the French, refused to recognize him, because he was originally

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from Provence. For three years, during which the insurrection lasted, the saint opposed it only by meekness and patience, although his friends urged him to make himself obeyed by force. Prince Uarento, his relation, one day said to him: "Leave me the care of chastising those rebels; I will have some of them hanged, and I promise you that will tame down the others. One must be a lamb towards the good, but as a lion in regard to the wicked."—"I am of quite a different opinion," answered the count, "I will not commence my reign by hanging and slaughtering my subjects; I like better to grant them favors. There is no glory for a lion in devouring a lamb, but what is truly remarkable is to see the lamb prevail over the lion, that is to say, mildness overcoming wrath. With God's grace, you shall soon see that prodigy." And this was what did, in fact, come to pass. The inhabitants of the earldom of Ariano, confounded and subdued by the gentleness of their new prince, submitted of themselves, and invited the saint to take quiet possession of his heritage. They loved and honored him always as a father, because he had known how to win their hearts by his patience and meekness.—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 487.

467.—*The Epaulettes Torn Off in Anger.*—"The soft word turneth away wrath, but the harsh word exciteth fury," the Scripture says. In fact, dear friends, saying offensive words to any one in anger is throwing oil on the fire; we should, on the contrary, speak to him mildly and calmly, in order to

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soothe him. In the first days of the Restoration, in 1814, the Duke de Berry, son of Charles X., a prince of a violent and impetuous disposition, was so angry with a lieutenant-colonel, in the middle of a review, that he publicly tore off his epaulettes and threw them on the ground. This brave officer, deeply mortified, could not even demand satisfaction from the prince for this insult; he begged an audience of the king in order to lodge his complaint. Louis XVIII., desirous of repairing the fault of his nephew, who, in the person of a superior officer, might alienate the whole army, received the outraged officer very kindly. Having heard his complaint, he told him with charming grace: "Make your mind easy, sir!—if my nephew took off your lieutenant-colonel's epaulettes, it was because he knew that they ought to be replaced by those of a colonel; this very day it is being attended to." And accordingly, my friends, that same day our officer received the brevet of his new grade. You will admit that the Duke de Berry's folly could not be repaired more pleasingly or more skilfully.—FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, I., 96.

VII.—ON IDLENESS AND WORK.

468. *A Solitary Who Does Not Want to Work.*—My friends, he that does not work should not eat, as St. Paul justly said: people should work, as far as they can, to earn their living. Persons who want to do nothing would deserve to be treated as was a solitary of whom mention is made in the *Lives of the Fathers*

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of the Desert. This solitary having gone to Abbot Sylvanus, who dwelt on Mount Sinai, and seeing the brethren at work, said to them: "Why do you labor thus for perishable food? Did not Mary choose the better part?" The holy old man, having heard the solitary's remarks, said to Zachary, his disciple: "Give that good brother a book to entertain him, and take him to a cell where there is nothing to eat." The hour of nones being come, that is to say, three o'clock in the afternoon, the strange solitary looked to see if the abbot would not have him summoned to dinner; and when that hour was passed, he went to the abbot and said to him: "Father, have the brethren not eaten to-day?" "Yes," replied the holy man. "And how did it happen," said the solitary, "that you did not send for me?"—"Because," said the abbot, "you, who are a spiritual man, have chosen the better part: you spend whole days reading, and have no need of perishable food; whereas we, who are carnal, cannot do without eating, and are, therefore, obliged to work." These words having made known to the solitary what his fault was, he was sorry for it, and asked pardon of the holy abbot, who told him: "I am very glad you have found out that Mary cannot do without Martha, and that so labor must always be joined to prayer and contemplation, since we have a body and a soul, each of which requires nourishment."—Père Marin, *Vie des Pères des Déserts.*

469. *Alfred the Great's Candles.*—It is not only in lowly conditions of society that labor is a duty, and

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even a want; it is so, children, even on the throne. If you read the history of Charlemagne, of St. Louis, of Louis XIV., of Napoleon, you would see how active, how laborious were those powerful monarchs. Listen: Alfred the Great, one of the most celebrated kings of England, and even one of the greatest princes who has honored the throne, had labor so much at heart, that he divided his time so as to find some to apply to all: to business, to study, to prayer. He divided the twenty-four hours of the day into three equal parts: one for the cares of the kingdom, the other for sleep, meals, reading and recreation, and the third for prayer and study. As clocks were then unknown, he took six candles, each of which burned for four hours, and his attendants warned him by turns when one of his six candles was consumed. In this manner he let two burn to make the eight hours consecrated to each thing. It was in the flower of his age and at the highest point of his glory that he made a vow to keep faithfully this distribution of his time, and he never failed therein. This great prince died in the year 900, regretted by his people as a father, as a legislator, and as a hero. Never had prince more affability for his subjects, nor more valor against their enemies; and, perhaps, there never was a more striking proof of what religion can do, on kings and peoples, for the glory and prosperity of states. Henry Spelman, a historian, transported with a sort of enthusiasm, paints him thus—"O Alfred! the wonder and astonishment of all ages! If we re-

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flect on his piety, we shall think that he lived always in a cloister; if we think of his warlike exploits, we shall judge that he never quitted the camp; if we recall to mind his knowledge and his writings, we shall suppose that he passed his whole life in academic shades; if we consider the wisdom of his government, and the laws he promulgated, we shall be persuaded that these objects were his only study." Behold, children, what people arrive at by employing their time well. The day is no longer for the learned man than for the ignorant; the whole difference comes from the manner in which one and the other employs it.—FELLER, *Biographie Universelle*, I., 193.

470. *A Malady Which People do Not Dare to Make Known.*—Idleness is a real disease, my very dear children, and, strange to say, it is, perhaps, the one that people dare least confess having. I have this fact from an unhappy man who had himself experienced it. It was in Ghent, one of the principal cities of Belgium. Some of the members of the municipal council were walking, engaged in conversation, in front of the magnificent City Hall, where they were to hold their sitting. All at once there appears before them a poor wretch who had nothing but rags on his body, and whose thin face was the picture of misery. He approaches, holding out his hand. "Gentlemen," said he, "have compassion on a poor wretch who is utterly destitute. I am stricken with a shameful malady, which has reduced my limbs to the impossibility of working. Take pity on me, I beseech

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you!" When the councillors had thrown some small pieces of money into his cap, without saying anything, he retired and went to parade his misery in other streets. Meanwhile one of those gentlemen who had been observing him with some degree of attention, and had seen that his limbs were well formed, felt curious to know what the pretended malady was that prevented him from working. He called his servant and told him to follow him some distance, and then to ask him what was the disease from which he said he had been so long suffering. The servant did as he was told; when he put the question to him—"Ah!" replied the beggar, "the disease that troubles me is not one of those that the doctors can cure: it is called *laziness*. You understand that having that I really cannot work, and so am obliged to beg my bread from door to door." A good lesson for us, my friends; let us try to profit by it.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 348.

471. *The Reading of an Idle Woman.*—People sometimes sin by idleness, dear children, even when they seem to be busy. Thus, he who would amuse himself in reading frivolous books, silly newspapers, or employ the time destined for matters of duty in giving himself up to works of pleasure, he, I say, would sin by idleness. Speaking of reading, here is a story I recently read; it is a lady who speaks, and relates the affair herself: "We had for neighbors, some years ago," said she, "a young couple, the husband a good workman, and his wife, no less tidy,

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active and laborious. In the morning she was seen busy about her household affairs, then employed in sewing, or something else, but never idle; hence, there was always on her face the expression of contentment, and on her lips the smile of good humor. Work, gaiety, health, are generally found together. But one day our young neighbor was not heard to laugh or sing as much as usual; then not at all; she even became quite silent, gloomy and melancholy. Her housework, done in haste, had no longer the air of neatness it formerly had. From the kitchen escaped frequently that peculiar odor which announces that the meat is burning or the soup boiling over into the fire. Yet the mistress of the house was still to be seen in her accustomed place; only she no longer used her needle, as before; no, but she had in her hands,—guess what? A book! a book which appeared to absorb her whole attention. And, as you may well think, the volume was not a serious or useful book, a historical or moral book. For such, people are not apt to forget eating and drinking. What the poor woman read, or rather devoured with such avidity, was, doubtless, a romance, I know not which, but I think the best of them is nothing worth. But one morning the husband went out. Returning home some hours after, he found the door closed. He knocks, he calls, no answer. Becoming uneasy he knocks louder, still obstinate silence. Then, by a violent effort, he breaks the lock, and in the farther room, whence there escaped a strong smell of char-

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coal, he finds his poor wife stretched on the bed, a corpse!—This unhappy woman, having become idle and listless by reading silly books, grew disgusted with life, and suffocated herself. She was scarcely twenty-seven years old!"—And yet some will say, dear friends, that the passions do not injure our health, our life, our happiness!—Abbé Mullois, *Mois de Marie de tout le Monde*, 78.

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ON GRACE.

THE MEANS THAT MUST BE EMPLOYED.

CHAPTER I.

472. *The Thunder-Stroke that Converted St. Norbert.*— The good God employs a thousand means to convert sinners; he waits, he engages, he prays, he touches, he strikes, according to circumstances. Thus, Heaven made use of the terrible voice of thunder to make St. Norbert enter into himself. Born in Rhenish Prussia, he had all the advantages that can please the world: an illustrious birth, great wealth, a taste for magnificence, all the attractions of mind and body. Seduced by the delusive charms of the world, he had no other desire than to live in distinction and abundance, and he consumed his riches in luxury and in worldly entertainments. His gay and playful disposition rendered him the soul of all parties of pleasure. Carried away by a whirl of amusements succeeding each other without intermission, he never entered into himself, and made none of those serious reflections which might have dispelled the illusions that enchanted him. Still he was very far from finding himself perfectly happy. An insupportable void warned him, do as he

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would, that virtue alone could procure him peace of mind; but he loved his chains, and had not the courage to endeavor to break them. It was all over with him if God had not struck one day a great blow to awake him from his lethargic slumber. One day Norbert was on horseback attired with his usual elegance; he went to the country, on a party of pleasure. Being in the middle of a beautiful meadow, he was suddenly assailed by a violent storm, accompanied by thunder and lightning. As he found himself at a great distance from any shelter, uneasiness and fear took possession of him; he resolved to continue his way and to ride home with all speed; but, at that moment, the thunderbolt fell at his horse's feet with a horrible crash. The frightened animal threw his rider, who lay on the ground, as it were dead, for nearly an hour. When Norbert came to himself again, he exclaimed in the bitterness of his soul: "Lord, what wilt Thou that I do?" An interior voice answered him: "Shun evil and do good, and seek peace untiringly." An event of so extraordinary a nature made the most lively impression upon him. He immediately formed a project of expiating his past life by a sincere penance, and that generous resolution was soon put into execution. Norbert became a model of penance and austerity; he even founded a religious order, that of the Premonstratensians, which still exists in Italy, and has recently been introduced into France.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, VI., 158.

473. *Either I Shall be Saved, or I Shall be Damned.*—

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Speaking of grace, which is a purely gratuitous gift of God, let me relate to you the following story; it will show you how we ought to act and to reason. Louis, landgrave of Thuringia, was a prince whom pleasures had entirely blinded, and who found no other means of stifling the remorse of his conscience than this false reasoning—"Either I am predestined," said he, "or I shall be damned. If I am predestined, whatever I do I shall be saved; if, on the contrary, I am to be condemned, though I were the most virtuous in the world, I shall be damned; thus, my fate is fixed, I need not trouble myself about the future." He never failed to make use of this sophism in replying to all those good people who tried to make him enter into himself; he would have died in this miserable state were it not for the interposition of Divine Providence. Here is the fact: This prince having fallen dangerously ill, sent for his physician, a man of eminent virtue and capacity, who made use of this fortunate circumstance to cure him of the blindness of his mind, much more dangerous than was his corporal malady. After making his examination, he told him gravely: "Prince, it is useless to try any remedy,—because," he added, "God has either foreseen that you shall die of this disease, or he has foreseen that you shall be cured. If He has foreseen that you shall die of it, in vain should we employ all the remedies of art; if, on the contrary, He has foreseen that you shall not die of it, you shall infallibly recover."—"How!" said the patient, "do you not see

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that if you assist me not speedily, the violence of the disease will carry me off, and that it is prudent to neglect nothing in such circumstances?" Then the wise physician, making use of the occasion, made him this fine answer: "Prince, if this reasoning appears to you defective, now that there is question of saving the life of the body, why will you make use of it when there is question of the salvation of your soul? If you think it is prudence to employ all imaginable remedies to preserve your life, although you know that the hour of your death is fixed from all eternity, why do you resist grace? Why do you refuse to do penance and to lead a more regular life, under pretence that God having foreseen that you shall be damned or that you shall be saved, you cannot change the decrees of His providence? The uncertainty of the time of your death prompts you to omit nothing to preserve your life; should not the uncertainty of your happy or unhappy eternity induce you likewise to take means to secure your salvation?" This discourse made so much impression on the prince's mind that, blinded and hardened as he was, he resolved to amend his life.—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 329.

474. *Henry IV. and the Grace of God.*—We can do nothing available for salvation, dear friends, if we are not aided and assisted by the grace of God. This is what Henry IV. did not understand in his youth. One day in a conversation with his preceptor, he expressed

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the liveliest desire to equal and even surpass all the celebrated men who had been the subject of their studies. The preceptor said to him: "What security will you give me that you will execute this generous resolution?"—"How! what security? you do not then think me sincere?"—"I doubt not but you are; but you are making engagements very difficult to fulfil; and I should like to know whereon you found the hope of acquitting yourself of them."—"Why, on the extreme desire I have to do so; is one not certain of success in the things he undertakes with his whole heart? For example, being fond of playing tennis, and knowing that I shall have that pleasure, if you are pleased with my work, I apply myself to it with more ardor, and I always succeed in it. If, then, being still a child, and for so trifling a reward as that, I redouble my efforts, what will it be when I am a grown-up man, and propose to myself for reward, the love, the esteem, the praises of my fellow-men at home and abroad? Then nothing can restrain me, neither labor, nor even dangers."—"That is to say, then," observed the sage governor, "that to be always virtuous it suffices to will it, and that it depended only on those great men, in whose lives we have remarked weaknesses, faults, and even enormous crimes, never to commit them?"—"Undoubtedly," replied young Henry eagerly.—"It is time, my dear child, that I open your eyes, and teach you that you reason as a pagan, and not as a christian. Know, then, that man is incapable of himself, I not only say

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of doing a good action, but even of desiring to do it, if God does not form that desire in him. So, my dear child, you may rest assured that it is God who inspires you with this noble emulation to imitate the great men of all countries and of all ages, and that it is He alone who can give you strength to execute it." Let us reason in the same way, dear friends, and act accordingly.—Noel, *Cat. de Rodez*, VI., 158.

475. *An Actress Turned Carmelite.*—Grace pursues us everywhere, my friends, and the greatest misfortune that can befal us is to resist it wilfully; on that our salvation depends. A young person, named Mad'lle Gaultier, lost her father at the age of seventeen. Finding herself portionless, and those who should have provided for her subsistence having refused to do so, she went to seek her fortune in the theatrical career. She had at first some repugnance to it, but this she soon overcame, the more so as she acquired in a short time the greatest celebrity. In vain, then, did a virtuous cousin try to bring her back to a way of life more analogous to the education she had received; the young woman laughed at her remonstrances. Fêted by the great, pensioned by princes, intoxicated with the homage of the multitude, she swims in an ocean of wealth and pleasure; she pleases the world, and the world pleases her; that suffices. "Before thinking of the future paradise of which you speak to me," she said to her cousin, "I will enjoy a little of the earthly paradise, in which I am faring so well; moreover, if ever I am converted,

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it will not be before the age of forty-five." Nevertheless she was not yet thirty, when grace spoke to her heart and made her feel uneasy. She goes to hear Mass; she is still more tormented. She then resolves to go to Mass every day; but remorse follows her everywhere. Faithful, however, to a practice so uncommon in her state of life, she goes to church regularly every morning, but the evening sees her in the theatre. Her professional acquaintances rally her on her devotion; she feels they are right, and that no one can serve two masters at the same time. On the point of deciding she experiences the most violent struggle. At length grace prevails, her resolution is taken, she abruptly breaks off all her connections, and leaves Paris amazed at her retirement from the stage. Meanwhile a nobleman of high rank offers to give her one of his estates in perpetuity if she would only make her permanent abode there. She escapes even this new snare, and finally Providence conducts her to the Carmelites of Lyons, whom she edified by all the virtues of a fervent religious.—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 331.

476. *A Protestant Pursued by Grace.*—The goodness of God never fails us; on the contrary, He seems to take delight in pursuing us with His grace, as He pursued a Protestant of the city of Lyons, some years before the Revolution. I read an interesting account of it in the *Month of Mary* by Father Debussi. This Protestant was passing through a street of the city, when he met the holy Viaticum, which was being

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taken to a sick person. Vexed at the meeting he quickens his steps to avoid it, and flies from street to street. Singular to relate! the priest that carried the Blessed Sacrament follows him step for step, having no other way to take to go where he was called. The Protestant can bear it no longer; he enters the first door that presents itself, and ascends to the very upper story. It was precisely the house and room where lay the sick person to whom the holy Viaticum was being brought. Suddenly he sees himself surrounded by those persons who accompany the Blessed Sacrament; at this sight, he is utterly confounded, he can fly no farther. At the same moment grace touches his heart, urging him to be converted and adore Our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist. "What!" said he then to himself, "God pursues me with His grace, and I fly Him! No, Lord, I will not be unfaithful to Thee; I will no longer resist Thee. I believe, I abjure my errors, and from this moment I promise Thee to live as a Catholic to the end of my life." He left the sick room with the others, followed them to the church, went to find a priest, and made his confession that very day. Behold, dear friends, the faithful image of the persevering goodness whereby God pursues us with His grace every day; let us try to be always faithful to it.—Debussi, *Nouveau Mois de Marie*, 270.

477. *Jesus Christ is Honored in the Poor.*—"Whatsoever ye do in My name to the least of these My brethren, ye do it unto Me." It was Our Lord who said these words, and they are sometimes fulfilled in a mi-

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raculous manner. A great sinner, frightened at his sad state, and sincerely resolved to amend his life, was grieved that he could not weep his sins as he wished. He one day left his house, overwhelmed with sorrow, and heedless of where he went, in order to seek some consolation. Going out, he met at the door a poor man, whose misery appeared extreme. He was touched by it, and remembering that Our Lord Jesus Christ had said that He would consider as done to Himself what should be done to the least of His brethren, he returned into his house with the poor man and gave him abundant alms. At the same time, he throws himself at his feet, as he would have done before Jesus Christ himself. In that humble and resigned posture, he said in the depth of his heart to Our Lord, whom he beheld by faith in the person of that poor man: "Lord Jesus, Thou art in this poor man: Oh! if I could give Thee my heart! but it is so hard, that I dare not offer it to Thee. Receive this bread I can give Thee now, and in future do with my heart whatsoever Thou wilt!" This humility was so efficacious, that he suddenly felt his heart softened, and his eyes bathed in tears. God afterwards gave him most signal graces, to which he had the happiness of being faithful. He had thus once more experienced in himself the efficacy of Our Lord's words.—FILASSIER, *Dict. Hist. d'Educ.*, I., 537.

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CHAPTER II.

ON PRAYER.

478. *Abraham's Prayer for Sodom.*—The most affecting story I know, dear friends, on the efficacy of prayer, is that of Abraham interceding for the guilty cities of the Plain. The abominations of Sodom and Gomorrha had reached such a point, that God had resolved to destroy those two cities. He disclosed His intention to Abraham on the way to Sodom, and the holy patriarch being come to within a short distance of that city began to pray for it: "Lord! wilt Thou destroy the just with the wicked? If there are fifty just men in the city, shall they perish with the others? Or rather, if fifty just men be found therein, wilt Thou not pardon it because of them? Surely Thou wilt not destroy the just with the wicked. That is not in accordance with Thy mercy."—"If I find fifty just men in Sodom," the Lord replied, "I will forgive the whole city for their sake."—"As I have once commenced to speak, I will speak again, Lord! although I am but dust and ashes. If there be five less than fifty, wilt Thou destroy the city because those five are wanting?"—"No, I will

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not destroy it," the Lord answered, "if I find forty-five."—"But if there be only forty, what wilt Thou then do?"—"I will forgive the whole city because of the forty," the Lord again answered. "I beseech Thee, Lord," then said Abraham, "be not angry if I speak again. What if there be only thirty?" And be it observed in passing, my friends, that Abraham at first only diminished by fives, but the favorable disposition which he finds in the mind of God to grant him what he asks, makes him afterwards diminish by tens. He goes down, then, to thirty, then to twenty, then at last to ten, and, each time, the Lord graciously replied: *I would forgive the whole guilty city.* Unhappily, he did not even find ten just men therein, and the city was consumed by fire from heaven. But the holy patriarch's prayer remains none the less as the model of ours.—*Genesis*, Chap. XIX.

479. *Sublime Prayer of Moses for His People.*—The most sublime devotion of which history makes mention, my friends, is that of Moses in behalf of the Jewish people. God would destroy the children of Israël, because they had worshipped the golden calf; Moses then interceded for them and said to God: "Why, O Lord, is Thy wrath enkindled against Thy people, whom Thou hast drawn out of the land of Egypt by the power of Thy hand? I beseech Thee let not the Egyptians say: 'He has taken them out from here to kill them in the mountains and efface them from the earth.' Let Thine anger cease, and be not mindful of the sins of Thy people. Remem-

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ber Thy servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom Thou didst swear by Thine own self that thou wouldst multiply their seed even as the stars of heaven, and that all the land whereof Thou hast spoken thou wouldst give their posterity to possess forever."—"Let Me alone," said the Lord, "I will destroy them." "But why, O Lord!" exclaims St. Augustine, "why say: *Let Me alone?* Who is it, then, that prevents Thee, or can prevent Thee, from acting thus? who can tie up Thy hands? who can resist Thy will? Why, then, say: *Let Me alone?* Here you see, my brethren," continues this learned Doctor, "what the force of prayer is; it prevents the effect of God's wrath, and that is what He meant to make us understand by the words: *Let Me alone.* It was not an express commandment, because if it had been, Moses would have done wrong not to obey it; neither was it a prayer, for God does not pray to His creatures; but they clearly point out to us that the prayers of the just are able to arrest the anger of God and to suspend His vengeance.—RODRIGUEZ, *Chris. Perf.*, V., 84.

480. *The Thundering Legion.*—At the time when Marcus Aurelius was making war on the Sarmatians, his army got entangled in a country full of woods and mountains. The Romans suffered exceedingly from hunger and thirst, and yet could not make their way out, for the barbarians, who were in greater number, occupied all the posts in the vicinity, and kept them, as it were, besieged. The army was on the point of

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perishing, in the extremity to which it found itself reduced. There was in that army a great number of Christian soldiers; they all knelt down and prayed fervently to God. The enemy were astonished, but they were much more so by what happened; great clouds suddenly gathered in the firmament, then an extraordinary rain began to fall. At first the Romans, dying with thirst, as I have said, held up their heads and received this miraculous water in their mouths, but afterwards they filled their helmets with it, drank abundantly themselves, and then gave their horses to drink. The barbarians seized this moment to attack them, so that they drank fighting; some of the wounded even drank their blood with the water; but that did not last long. In fact, there came down on their opponents a terrific hail, accompanied by thunder and lightning; fire and water seemed to fall from heaven in the same place; but either the fire did not touch the Romans or was immediately extinguished. On the contrary, the rain was of no use to the barbarians, it burned them like oil, so that wet as they were, they sought water, and wounded each other to extinguish the fire with their own blood. Several went over to the side of the Romans, seeing that the water was only good for them; Marcus Aurelius had compassion on them and willingly received them. It was then that the army gave him, for the seventh time, the name of *Imperator;* he received it as coming from heaven, for every one regarded that event as miraculous. The troops of

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Christians who had drawn down this miracle by their prayers almost all belonged to the *Thundering Legion*. A monument of this prodigy may still be seen in Rome, in the *bas reliefs* of the column of Antolinus, erected at that time. The Romans are there represented with arms in their hands near the barbarians, who, with their horses, are seen extended on the ground, a fiery rain falling on them. On this occasion, Marcus Aurelius wrote letters in which he testified that his army, when ready to perish, was saved by the prayers of the Christians; at the same time he suspended the execution of an edict which he had issued against them some time before. This prodigious event took place in the year 174 of the Christian era, in the mountains of Bohemia.—Fleury, *Hist. Eccles.*

481. *Miracles Wrought by Labor.*—By prayer, dear children, everything can be accomplished; ecclesiastical history and the lives of the saints are full of examples of this kind. Here is one which, I think, you do not all know. St. Auxentius, whilst yet a layman, was one day passing through a back street in Constantinople, inhabited chiefly by tradesmen. One of these, I think a shoemaker, standing before his house, lamented aloud that for several weeks he had had no work. "If it goes on so," said he, "it will be all over with myself and my family, and my business, too!" Auxentius drew near this poor man and asked if he would not take him for some time into his service as an assistant or journeyman. "I pledge my-

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self," said he, "to work several hours in the day, and I ask nothing from you, neither board, wages, nor food; I want only three oboles a day." The shoemaker, to whom this accommodating applicant for at the end of some weeks, Auxentius left off going to work was unknown, was soon prevailed upon by the mild persuasion that seemed to flow from his lips; he accepted his offer, declaring, however, that he had no work, even for himself. Auxentius, nevertheless, entered his miserable stall, and modestly withdrew into a corner, to raise his heart in silence to heaven. A few hours had only passed, when people were seen coming in from all sides to order work. Next day the concourse was still greater, and on the third day, things came to such a point that the employer was obliged to engage several other workmen. Finally, the shop; but the blessing his prayers had drawn down on the owner's house never left it. So that he might well have put on his sign the words

TO PRAYER.

—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 293.

482. *A Doctor Who Does Not Know How to Pray.*—To pray, dear friends, there is no need of being a great doctor; on the contrary, there are sometimes learned men who understand nothing at all about it. The celebrated Lanfranc was wholly given up to the study of human science, and had thereby acquired a great reputation; but he had neglected the affair of his salvation. Passing one day through a forest on his way to Rouen, he was stopped by robbers, who hav-

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ing taken from him all he had, tied his hands behind his back, bandaged his eyes, and left him in some thick bushes, at a great distance from the road. In this extremity, not knowing what was to become of him, Lanfranc abandoned himself to profound sadness, and bewailed his unhappy fate. Night being come, he entered still more seriously into himself, and would have prayed to God, but knew not how, because he had never learned. Then he said: "Lord, I have employed so much time in study that I have wasted away both mind and body, and yet I know not how to pray to you. Deliver me from this danger, and, with your assistance, I will so regulate my life that I may serve you, and attach myself only to you." When I tell you, my friends, that he did not know how to pray, I mistake; he made an excellent prayer; but he was so ignorant in regard to religion, that he appeared to think that, to pray to God and sing His praises, particular forms were required. He knew not, then, that it is the heart that prays; and, in fact, the prayer he then addressed to God was, on his part, a lively desire to be delivered from the extremity to which he found himself reduced, and, therefore, as I have just told you, it was a true prayer; as such God heard it. Some travellers passing by unbound him and brought him back to the right way. He besought them to show him the poorest monastery they knew of in those parts. They told him of the Abbey of Bec, founded by the Venerable Hellouin. When Lanfranc arrived, he found the

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Saint engaged building an oven, at which he was working with his own hands. "What do you want?" said Hellouin to him. "I want to be a monk," Lanfranc answered. The Abbot gave him the book of the rule, told him to read it, as St. Benedict orders to be done with postulants. The new comer having read it all through very attentively, said that with God's help he would observe all it prescribed. The Abbot knowing who he was and whence he came, willingly received him into the monastery. It was thus that his prayer was granted, and that he put into execution the promise he had made to God. Lanfranc afterwards became Archbishop of Canterbury, in England, and was one of the most illustrious men of the eleventh century.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, III., 45.

483. *The Horse and Bridle.*—My dear friends, you have, I am sure, some distractions in your prayers, for a high degree of sanctity must be attained before one can bear that consoling testimony to themselves that they never have any. Some may flatter themselves with being exempt from them, whose prayer is, perhaps, but one continual distraction. St. Bernard being one day on a journey, was joined on the road by a worthy peasant; he entered into conversation with him, and soon contrived to make it fall on a religious subject, for the instruction of his fellow-traveller. Whilst chatting together he asked him, amongst other things, if he loved God. Whereupon the other answered simply—"Oh! as for that, father, I think I love Him with my whole heart."—"Do you

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often pray to Him? above all, do you pray to Him with attention?"—"Oh yes, father, I never have any distractions." St. Bernard saw well that the man did not know what it was to be distracted; compassionating his ignorance, he made use of a singular stratagem to enlighten him.—"Well," said he, "my friend, let us make a bargain: if you are able to say the *Our Father* all through without distraction, I will give you the horse I ride."—"Agreed."—"Father, the horse is as good as won." And our man begins his *Our Father*, full sure that the horse was going to be his. But he had scarce got half through when he stopped, and addressing the Saint, said: "But, Father, will you give me the bridle, too?"—"Neither one nor the other, my friend," answered St. Bernard laughing; "there, you see, you are distracted." The man opened his eyes, and understood that he had hitherto been wholly ignorant of what it was to pray attentively.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, III., 79.

484. *The Name of Jesus Invoked by an Arab.*—Doubtless you have not forgotten, my very dear friends, what Our Lord said: "Whatsoever ye ask of My Father in My name He will give unto you." Here is an interesting story about that. The celebrated commentator, Benedict Fernandez, a Spaniard by birth, relates himself this remarkable example of the fidelity with which the Lord fulfils the promise He made to those who should pray to Him in the name of Jesus. A Mahometan, from the heart of Barbary, had left that country to retire to a Portu-

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guese castle, with the vague intention of one day embracing Christianity. The sun was shedding his most fervid rays on the earth; alone in the midst of an immense desert, walking over the burning sand, without water to slake his thirst, this poor young man, devoured by a thirst impossible to describe, stretched himself on the ground and quietly waited till death should come to end his torments. All at once he remembers having often heard it said by a Christian slave that the invocation of the name of Jesus was a means of succor in the greatest difficulties. Scarcely had he strove to pronounce that name as distinctly as his strength permitted when he felt his tongue and palate refreshed. He was completely delivered from the burning thirst that tormented him; his strength returned little by little, so that he was able to continue his journey with new courage. From that moment he had always at his disposal a sure and simple means of safety, for as often as he invoked the name of Jesus, he found it of the same efficacy. Thus it was that he arrived safe and sound at the Portuguese fort, whence he repaired to Lisbon, to receive baptism.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 396.

485. *A Miracle Related by Jean Jacques Rousseau.* —I am happy, dear friends, when I can tell you anything that was witnessed by an infidel philosopher The testimony of such persons no one can dispute. Listen; it is Jean Jacques Rosseau that speaks: "Madame de Warens lived at Annecy, in the house of M. Borgé; one day a fire broke out in the bake-

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house of the Franciscan Convent connected with the court of that house, and with such violence that the bakehouse, a pretty large building, filled with twigs and dry wood, was soon in a blaze. The flames, carried along by an impetuous wind, reached the roof of the house, and penetrated through the windows to the apartments. Madame de Warens first gave her orders, to endeavor to arrest the progress of the fire, and to have her furniture conveyed to the garden. She was thus engaged when she learned that the Bishop, hearing of the misfortune wherewith she was threatened, was coming with all speed. She went immediately to meet him; they entered the garden together; he knelt down with her and all the others who were present, and I myself was of the number; he then began to pray with his wonted fervor. The effect was sensible. The wind which was carrying the fire over the house to the garden suddenly changed its course, and so removed the flames from the house that the adjoining bakehouse was entirely consumed, whilst the house was no otherwise injured than by the damage it had previously sustained. This is a fact that was known to all Annecy, and which I saw with my own eyes." *Signed* ROUSSEAU.—What further proof do you require, dear friends, to convince you of the efficacy of a prayer made in a fitting manner?—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 435.

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CHAPTER III.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

I.—OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

486. *An Orphan in a Cemetery.*—A poor child was one day in a cemetery, where he was crying bitterly; it was there that the ashes of his beloved parents reposed. Now this child was doubly an orphan; he had lost his mother several years before, and his father had also been taken from his love. How hard and cruel this desertion appeared to him! "Alas!" said he, "I have no longer a father! The hand that toiled to support me is cold in death, mouldering in the grave. Never again shall I see that affectionate smile that rejoiced my heart, when I was wise and good; that mouth, that gave me such fine lessons, is closed forever. There is no one now to love me as that good father did! Ah! but it is hard, hard to have neither father nor mother!" Thus the poor orphan lamented, while his tears fell fast on his father's grave. All at once his tearful eyes fell on a cross. On it was portrayed an angel, who pointed with one hand to heaven, whilst the other held that

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beautiful prayer: *Our Father who art in heaven.* These words, like a celestial ray, descended suddenly into the poor orphan's soul, and dispelled the darkness that had gathered over it. Wiping away his tears, he clasped his little hands and began to pray anew: "Can it be, great God of heaven, that I have so soon forgotten you? You still remain my father; I have not lost you. You took my father away from me, and now you are going to take his place. You love children still more than their earthly fathers love them. You gave us your only Son for a brother, and through him we have been admitted to the number of your children; then, Father, who art in heaven, do not you abandon me, for I am a poor helpless orphan all alone on earth!" Thus the orphan prayed; he was consoled, and the Heavenly Father took care of him. He did not, indeed, become a rich man; but, what is infinitely better, he lived happy and contented, and that happiness he found in the simple repetition of the first words of the Lord's Prayer.—SCHMID et DELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 412.

487. *Beau Sejour's Seven Paters.*—Here, my good friends, is one of the most striking instances I know concerning the Lord's Prayer. A soldier named Beau Sejour had the pious custom of reciting every day seven *Our Fathers* and seven *Hail Marys*, in honor of the seven joys and seven sorrows of the Blessed Virgin. He was so faithful to this practice that he never once missed it. If it happened that he remembered, after lying down, that he had not fulfilled this duty, he

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rose immediately, whatever time it was, and said the prayers kneeling at the foot of his bed. One battle day, Beau Sejour was in the front rank, in presence of the enemy, awaiting the signal for attack. Remembering then that he had not said his accustomed prayer, he began to do so, after blessing himself as usual. The other soldiers who were beside him, seeing Beau Sejour at his prayers, began to make merry at his expense; they went so far as to call him a coward, a poltroon, and such like. The word flew from mouth to mouth—"Beau Sejour is afraid,"—"Beau Sejour is a devotee!" He heard all this going on, but nevertheless continued his prayer, quite unconcerned. But what happened, dear children, some moments after? The enemy made their first charge, and, wonderful to relate, of his whole rank Beau Sejour alone remained standing; he saw lying dead at his feet all those who, but a moment before, were ridiculing him for his piety! All the rest of the battle, which was long and bloody, and even during the whole campaign, a tedious and disastrous one, he received no wound. After the war he obtained his discharge, and returned home safe and sound, fully resolved never to leave off a practice he had found so beneficial.—Debussi, *Nouv. Mois de Marie.*

488. *The Young Shepherd's Prayer.*—You know, dear friends, it was Our Lord Himself who taught us to pray by saying the *Our Father;* that simple prayer is enough of itself. A holy priest, travelling in the neighborhood of Clermont, in Auvergne, per-

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ceived not far from the road a young shepherd, in whom he thought he recognized, by his grave and collected mien, something supernatural. He was feeding his flock. Approaching the boy the priest said: "How, my friend, you are alone here all the day! You must be lonely."—"Oh no, father, I am not a bit lonely; I am always busy."—"And what is your occupation? what do you do, my child, to prevent you from being lonely?"—"Here is what I do, reverend father!—I know a beautiful prayer,—oh! and it is a beautiful, a consoling prayer! So my greatest happiness is to say it." "But you do not pray all day long, do you?"—"All day long, father, and yet I cannot get to the end of my prayer; it is so beautiful, so sweet, that I want nothing more to fill my heart with joy."—"And what prayer is it? Truly, it must be very long, since you cannot say it in a whole day."—"Oh! no, it is not long, it is, on the contrary, very short."—"I do not understand you; you say it is very short, and yet you cannot finish it in one day?"—"Why, you see, father, that's because I love my prayer so much; it is so touching that as soon as I begin to say it the tears flow from my eyes in spite of me, and so it is the whole day long."—"That is all very well, but you have not told me what this short prayer is and how you recite t."—"That prayer, reverend father, is the *Our Father*.—Here is how I do to say it. Before I begin I raise my heart to God; then I say, 'Our Father who art in heaven.' There I stop, thinking of the favor

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God bestows upon me in allowing me to call him my Father. Is it possible that I, a poor little shepherd, have God for a Father, and a God so good, so great, so powerful? a God who made that beautiful sky, that shining sun, this earth with its rivers, its forests, its mountains? Yes, He permits me, poor wretched little creature, who am nothing, to say to Him, '*My Father!*' These thoughts, reverend father, and many others that occur to me, which it would take too long to tell you, fill me with admiration, gratitude, and love; then I begin to weep, and cannot go on with my prayer. And then, father, you see there below between those two trees, far, far away behind the third hill, that little village, with only a few houses? Well! that's where I live, and my family is the poorest in it. Oh! the wonderful goodness of God, to think that I can call Him my Father, as well as the greatest gentleman in the city! I am a child of God just as he is!" The priest, much affected, went away, saying: "Continue to pray thus, my young friend, and God will bless you." What better could he say?—*Recomp. Hebdom.*

489. *A Swearer who Says His "Our Father."*—If we meditated well on the Lord's Prayer, my dear children, we should find therein all religion, and see that that prayer is truly sublime. I remember a little story about that, which I am going to tell you. An Englishman, in the town of Shelton, had the bad habit of swearing often and on the most trifling account. He was cured of it in a very singular way

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by a little girl of five or six years old. The child, unable to bear without indignation the sacrilegious words vomited forth by this man, one day asked her mother if she thought Mr So-and-so said the Lord's Prayer every day. The mother answered that she did not know. The little girl was determined to make herself sure, and watching him closely, she one day perceived him really saying the Lord's Prayer. Soon after, when an opportunity offered, the most revolting blasphemies were heard again. The little girl went up to him and said with a very serious air: "Mr. So-and-so, you said the Lord's Prayer this morning, and gave God the name of father?"—"Well, yes! but why do you ask the question?"—"Why, how could you call Him your father when you swear all day long and grievously offend Him?" The culprit, not expecting any such question, especially from a little child, felt the blush rising to his forehead, and what is better, he was never after heard to curse or swear. So he could ever after say his *Our Father* without being ashamed.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 150.

II.—THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

490. *The Revelations of Little Samuel.*—Doubtless you all know, dear friends, the story of the little Samuel. The most interesting incident of his life is, undoubtedly, what happened to him at the age of twelve years. Therein we see how we ought to

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obey the will of God. One night when he was sleeping in the tent in which was kept the Ark of the Covenant, the Lord called him: "Samuel! Samuel!" He rises immediately, runs to the high priest Heli, and says: "Here I am; you called me."—"I did not call you, my son," answered Heli; "go back and sleep." He goes back and again falls asleep. But the Lord having called him again, he rises and returns to the high priest, saying: "Here I am, for you did call me." Heli answers as before: "My son, I did not call you; go and sleep in peace." The boy obeyed without saying a word. The Lord having called him a third time, he rises, goes again to Heli, and once more says: "You called me; here I am." Then Heli, understanding that it was the Lord who had called Samuel, told him: "Go and sleep; and if you are again called, you will say: 'Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth.'" Samuel went back to his bed, and the Lord having appeared to him and called him twice, he answered, as Heli had told him: "Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth." The Lord then declared to him that the punishment wherewith he had threatened Heli should soon be accomplished. We find in this simple story the way in which we ought to do the will of God, and obey Him everywhere and in all things.—1*st Book of Kings*, Chap. III.

491. *I Shall One Day Reign in Heaven.*—The very thought of the happiness that awaits us, my dear friends, should suffice to make us bear the miseries of

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life. John Mosch, having renounced the world and retired to the Monastery of St. Theodosius, near Jerusalem, was sent to Egypt, by his superior, on some business. There was then in a desert of Lybia a solitary named Leo, who was originally from Cappadocia. His virtues were so much extolled that John resolved to go and see him. He found him just as he had been described. He remarked that he was very humble and very charitable, that he loved silence and seclusion, that he was poor in heart, and much detached from earthly things. This good brother sighed for the happiness of heaven, and to show the hope he had of obtaining it, he often said: *I shall one day reign.* John and others who did not understand the meaning of these words, sometimes said to him, half in jest, half in earnest, that Cappadocia had not yet produced any persons who might wear the crown. But still he kept repeating: *Yes, I shall one day reign.* Then he added some words to make them understand that, by those words, he meant to speak of eternal glory. Thus was he truly of the number of those whom the Gospel styles the children of the kingdom, who have a taste for things above, and already live in Heaven by the desire they have to reign with Christ throughout the ages of eternity. John Mosch went away edified from the cell of that religious, who appeared so poor in the eyes of the world, and who now reigns gloriously in Heaven.—Rodriguez, *Chrèt. Perf.*, III., 136.

492. *The Secret of Working Miracles.*—I am sure,

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my dear children, you would like to be able to work miracles like the saints. Here is a secret which succeeded perfectly with one of them; try it and you shall see. In a convent of Spain there lived, in the fourteenth century, a monk whose prayers wrought numerous cures. People were amazed, and all the more so because there were no extraordinary signs of sanctity about the man. The Superior of the convent took him aside one day, and wished to know how it was that the Lord wrought such prodigious cures by his intermediation. "I am surprised myself," answered the good monk, "that God deigns to make use of a miserable sinner like me to relieve and cure the sick. I do not owe that favor to any particular virtue; hitherto, I have merely done all I could to conform in all things to the will of God. When I am sick, I say to the Lord: 'My God, Thy will be done!' If I am obliged, by order of my superiors, to go to another house, I likewise see in that order the will of God, and I say again, 'Thy will be done.'" "But, brother," again asked the Abbot, "how did you do the other day when some malicious person set fire to our court and caused us so much damage?" "Father," said the religious, "I contented myself with saying the Pater low to myself, dwelling particularly on the petition, '*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!*'" Here the Abbot recognized very clearly that it was this entire submission to the will of God which had made this good and simple religious one of the most intimate friends of the

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Lord, and had, consequently, won for him the gift of miracles. Let us do the same thing, my friends, and if God does not grant us the same gift, He will, at least, bestow upon us other graces not less precious. —SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 457.

493. *A Woman who Dares to Prefer Her Own Will to that of God.*—Speaking of that petition of the Lord's Prayer—"Thy will be done," I remember a terrible story, which took place in Germany about the year 1825, if I am not mistaken. A woman had but one child, a boy. This child fell ill, and the disease made such fearful progress that all remedies were alike powerless. It was all over with him; he was going to die. At first the mother was a prey to mortal anguish, but when she saw clearly that she was about to lose her poor child, despair took away her reason, for that son was dearer to her than all the world, dearer even than God, as you are about to see. The pastor of the parish, hearing of the child's illness, went to the house to try to console the mother, and inspire her with sentiments of resignation; alas! all he could say had no effect on the mind of the unfortunate woman. He tried another means; standing near the sick bed, he began to pray, not so much for the child as for his mother. He said, among other things: "Lord, if it be Thy will, restore health to this poor child!" The mother, hearing this, began to cry out in a fury of anger: "Say not, *if it be Thy will;* I cannot bear those words; it *must* be His will. God cannot allow my child to die; I must have him

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live." The priest was terrified by these words; he had nothing to do but retire sad and afflicted. Contrary to his expectation, and to the indescribable satisfaction of the mother, the child was perfectly restored to health. But alas! it would have been better if he had died, for he grew in malice and in wickedness according as he advanced in age. He overwhelmed his unhappy mother with sorrow, became an abandoned ruffian, and to crown his misfortune, was condemned to die on a scaffold, and that in the very presence of her who had refused to resign herself to the will of God! A great lesson for us all, dear friends; let us never forget it.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 460.

III.—GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

494. *An Emperor on Bread and Water.*—I have read in the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert* a curious story about *daily bread.* A solitary, who led a most holy life, and who gave himself no concern about what related merely to his body, had settled within a short distance of Constantinople, and attracted the admiration of every one by his confidence in Divine Providence. Those words of the Lord's Prayer: *Give us this day our daily bread*, made all his hope; he had never been deceived. The Emperor Theodosius having heard him spoken of, wished much to see him. One day, dressed as a private individual, he climbed the mountain side to the cell of this good

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religious. He had a long conversation with him. At the end of some hours the Emperor, pressed by hunger, asked the solitary if he could give him something to eat. "Yes, sir," he answered, "here is a piece of bread and a pitcher of water; I have nothing else to offer you." Theodosius took the piece of bread and ate it with much relish. He then asked the solitary if he were content in his position. "I am so happy in it," he replied, "that I would not change it for that of the Emperor. I have nothing; I wish for nothing; no one disturbs me. If I am in want of any necessary, I ask it of Providence, who never deserts me." "Do you know me?" said the Emperor. "No, sir, I never saw you before." "Well, I am Theodosius; I came to edify myself a little while in your company. Oh! that it were given to me to share your happiness, to pass the rest of my life in this solitude, far from the troubles of the world, and to eat like you a piece of common bread. Then, at least, I could prepare well to appear before God." The Emperor retired, but from that day forth he always cherished a certain wish to enjoy the true, pure happiness of those who possess nothing, who desire nothing, and who place all their confidence in the Lord.—Père Marin, *Vies des Pères des Deserts.*

495. *A New Pater Composed by a Child.*—You know, dear friends, that the *Pater* was taught us by Our Lord himself. I know a little child who took the liberty of making singular changes in it. Listen: One morning his mother, named Teresa, said to her

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five children, all very young yet: "My dear children, I can give you nothing for breakfast this morning; I have no bread, no flour, not even an egg in the whole house; I have not been able to earn anything these days past; pray to God to assist us, for He is rich and powerful, and he says: 'Come to me all you who are afflicted, and I will relieve you.'" Little Christian, the child of whom I have just spoken, scarcely six years old, went away fasting and very sorrowful to school. He passed the church door, went in and knelt before the altar. Seeing no one, he prayed aloud as follows: "Our Father, who art in heaven, we are five poor children who have nothing to eat. Our mother has neither bread, nor flour, not even an egg; give us something to eat, that we and our dear mother may not die of hunger. O my God! come to our assistance! You who are so rich and so powerful, it is easy for you to relieve us! You promised you would, and now is the time to keep your promise." So the good little boy prayed in the simplicity of his heart, then he went to school. What was his surprise on returning home to see on the table a big loaf of bread, a large dish of flour, and a whole basket of eggs. "Ah! God be praised," he cried, transported with joy, "He has heard my prayer. Tell me, mother, wasn't it an angel that brought you all that through the window?" "No, my child," answered the mother, "yet God heard your prayer. When you were praying before the altar, the Mayor's wife happened to be kneeling in a

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chapel near you. You could not see her, but she saw and heard you. That charitable lady hastened immediately to provide for our wants; she is the good angel whom God sent to our assistance. Now, my dear children, thank the good God, rejoice, and never forget the beautiful maxim—'If we only leave all to God, He will be our best provider.'"—Abbé MULLOIS, *Mois de Marie de tout le Monde*, 86.

496. *The Bread of the Poor.*—Let us always have confidence in the goodness of God, dear friends, He will find means to give us our daily bread. One day the virtuous Mary Leczinska, Queen of France, was walking alone in the broad alleys of the park of Versailles. She met a poor woman very badly clad, crossing it with rapid steps; she had a pitcher in her hand, carried a little child on her arm, and was followed by others who had hold of her skirts. The queen called her. "Where are you going so fast, my good woman?"—"Madam, I'm going with soup to my man."—"And what is your man doing?"—"He is attending masons."—"How much does he earn a day?"—"Twelve sous now, but sometimes he gets only ten."—"Have you any ground?"—"No, madam!"—"How many children have you?"—"I have five of them now, all very young."—"And do you earn anything yourself?"—"No, madam, I have enough to do for my own family."—"How do you manage, then, to keep your house and support seven persons on twelve sous a day, sometimes on ten?"—"Ah! madam, there's my secret," showing a key that

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hung from her girdle. "I lock up my bread, and try to have always some for my man. If I let these children have their way, they would eat in a single day what ought to feed them for a week." The good princess, touched even to tears by this simple tale, slipped ten gold pieces into the poor woman's hand, telling her: "That will give a little more bread to your children every day; let them think a little of me when they say the Lord's Prayer."—REYRE, *Anec. Chret.*, 347.

497. *A New Petition in the Lord's Prayer.*—How I love, dear friends, children who are pious with faith and simplicity! The good God himself takes pleasure in granting them the object of their petitions, as we see from a circumstance that took place in Paris some ten or fifteen years ago. A very wealthy family had the misfortune to lose in one day its head and its whole fortune. Some days after, the poor mother could give her little girl, scarce six years of age, nothing but dry bread for breakfast, dinner and supper. At night, when she came to put the dear child to bed, she made her kneel down with her and say her prayers. The little Augustina then began: "*Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven; give us this day our daily bread*"—here she stops, and turning to her mother, says, with simplicity, "Mamma, cannot I ask for something with my bread?"—"Yes, my dear, I am willing that you should." And the mother wiped away a trickling

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tear. Then the little one went on: "*Give us this day our daily bread and something to take with it.*" On the following day, the wretch who had ruined this poor family confessed his fraud to the unhappy mother, brought her five thousand francs of what he had taken unjustly, and promised the rest in a short time; he owed her twenty thousand. You see, dear friends, how speedily the simple prayer of little Augustina was heard and answered.—F. A. M., *Joyeux Passe-Temps de la Jeunesse*, 227.

IV.—FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US.

498. *A Saint Throwing Stones at a Statue.*—As we are destined to live in society, my friends, it is necessary that we should bear with each other, and forgive mutually the little injuries one may do the other. It is related in the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert* that seven solitaries of Egypt assembled in one place and resolved to live together. They chose for their dwelling an old pagan temple, ruined and long deserted. But before installing themselves in it, the Abbot Nubus, who was to be as it were the superior of this little community, told the six others that they were to remain a week outside the temple, without saying a single word one to the other. During those eight days, the holy abbot went every morning to throw stones at a pagan idol that was in the temple, and, every evening, he said to it: *I was wrong in do-*

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ing what I did, forgive me! At the end of seven days, Abbot Pœmen, who was younger than he, said to him: "Why, father, did you ask pardon of that idol all the week?" The holy old man made answer: "It was for your sake I acted so. For, pray, tell me, when I threw stones at that idol, did it utter a single word of anger? and when I asked pardon of it, did it feel any vanity from my doing so?" "Certainly not," answered Abbot Pœmen. "My brethren," continued Abbot Nubus, "there are seven of us here; after the example of that idol, let none of us be angry when we are reproached, or give way to vanity when our pardon is asked." All promised the holy abbot to observe this rule; and they remained together several years in great joy and with true satisfaction. So true it is, my friends, that if charity reigned in all families, the world would be a foretaste of heaven.—P. MARIN, *Vie des Pères des Déserts.*

499. *Forgive us our Trespasses, as* ——.—Who amongst us, dear children, would dare to say the Lord's Prayer, if he retained either enmity or hatred against any one? Leontius, Bishop of Cyprus, who lived in the same century as St. John the Almoner, whose life he wrote, relates that that holy patriarch of Alexandria made use of this excellent means to oblige one of the greatest lords of that city to be reconciled with his enemy. He had exhorted him several times, but all in vain, to make his peace with him. Seeing him still inflexible, he requested him to come and see him, under pretence of some public

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business, and took him to his chapel, where he celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, letting in only one person to serve. After the consecration, when he had commenced the Lord's Prayer, which they all three recited together, according to the custom of that time, the holy patriarch made a sign to the server to be silent at the words: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us." He was silent himself, so that the nobleman was the only one who repeated the words. Then the Saint, turning towards him, said with much sweetness: "Think, my dear friend, I beg of you, what it is that you have just asked of God, and what you have declared to Him, at this dread celebration of the holy mysteries, when to induce Him to forgive you your trespasses, you protest that you have forgiven those who have done you wrong. And yet there is one who has offended you whom you refuse to pardon." These few words sufficed to throw the poor gentleman into salutary confusion. He admired the ingenious charity of the holy patriarch, and immediately after Mass hastened to embrace his enemy, grant him a generous pardon, and pledge to him a Christian friendship.—LEONTIUS, *Life of St. John the Almoner.*

500. *Mass Interrupted at the "Pater Noster."*—Amongst the edifying stories I have read in the life of St. John the Almoner, patriarch of Alexandria, there is one which I never forgot. He was one day celebrating Mass in his chapel. Being come to the moment

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for saying the Lord's Prayer, he suddenly remembered having been told that a certain deacon had conceived a great hatred of him. Immediately making some feasible excuse, he leaves the altar, and goes to the place where he expected to meet this deacon. He finds him there, and although there were several persons near him, the holy Pontiff threw himself at his feet, and besought him in Our Lord's name to forgive him, if he had unwittingly given him any cause of discontent. The deacon was so confused by the humility and charity of St. John the Almoner, that he knelt beside him, and with tears in his eyes said: "What are you doing? Arise, holy pontiff! it is for me to ask your forgiveness; I have done wrong, I repent of it, I beseech you pardon me!" The Saint rising up, took him by the hand and said: "God will forgive us both, my dear son!" He returned then to the church full of consolation, and once more ascending the altar, he repeated with a sweet confidence and great happiness this petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us." As for the deacon, he was so deeply struck with what the holy patriarch had just done in his regard that he thought of it unceasingly. It was better to him than all the sermons in the world, and from that day he made such progress in piety that, a short time after, he was deemed worthy of being ordained priest.—LEONTIUS, *Life of St. John the Almoner.*

501. *A Letter Burned by the Clemency of the Emperor Napoleon.*—It is always fine to forgive, my friends,

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but especially where one has the power in their hand, and would have but to speak a word to crush their enemy. Napoleon signalized his stay at Berlin, capital of Prussia, by an act of clemency which is justly entitled to the admiration of posterity. After the military occupation of that city by the French, the Prince de Hatsfeld had been retained by the Emperor in command of Berlin. One day, going out from an audience which he had had of Napoleon, he was arrested, was to have been brought before a military commission, and would have been inevitably condemned to death. A letter addressed by him to General Hohenlohe, intercepted at the outposts, had shown that, although he pretended to be solely occupied with the civil command of Berlin, he was secretly informing the enemy of the movements of the French. His wife, who was the daughter of the Minister Schulemburg, came to throw herself at the feet of Napoleon; she thought her father's hatred against France was the sole cause of her husband's arrest. The Emperor soon undeceived her, and gave her to understand that papers had been seized clearly establishing the fact that her husband was playing a double part, and that the laws of war were pitiless for such a crime. The princess attributed this accusation to imposture, calling it a calumny of his enemies. "You know your husband's handwriting," said the Emperor; I make you the judge." He brought the intercepted letter and gave it to her. The lady, more than eight

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months gone with child, grew fainter and fainter at every word that showed her how far her husband was compromised. Napoleon, touched by her anguish, said to her in a kind tone: "Madam, you hold that letter, throw it in the fire; that document once destroyed, I have no proof whereby to condemn your husband." The princess gratefully obeyed, and her husband was saved.—FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, I., 527.

V.—LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. AMEN.

502. *Seven Crowns for Seven Temptations.*—Here is a charming story that will prove to you, dear friends, that temptation is not a sin. An anchoret who dwelt in the Thebaïd, in the depth of Egypt, had with him a young disciple whom he had tried very severely. The holy old man was accustomed to make him an exhortation every evening, after which they made their prayer together, and he sent him to rest. It happened that, one day, some pious persons, drawn by this old man's reputation of sanctity, came to visit him, and remained with him till it was far in the night. After they were gone he began to make his exhortation as usual; but he made it so long that, towards the end, overcome with weariness, he was sleeping himself without perceiving it. His disciple waited, thinking every moment that he would awake so that they might say their

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prayers together and then retire. But, seeing that he did not awake, he became somewhat impatient, and was tempted to go to bed without saying anything. He resisted once, he resisted twice, and, the same thoughts having attacked him as much as seven times, he resisted still with much firmness. At length the holy man awoke when it was past midnight, and finding him still in the same place, asked him why he had not awoke him. The disciple answered that it was for fear of giving him any trouble. Having then said their matins together, the good old man gave him his blessing and sent him to rest. Meanwhile this holy old man, returning anew to prayer, was ravished in spirit to a place all radiant with glory, where an angel showed him a resplendent throne, whereon were seven bright crowns. The angel told him that this throne was for his disciple, for whom God had had it prepared, because of the sanctity of his life; and that for the seven crowns he had gained them that very night. As soon as the day was come, the holy old man hastened to question his disciple, and asked him what had happened during the night. The disciple related very simply the movements of impatience he had had; he told him he had been tempted seven times not to wait till he awoke; but that he had always resisted the temptation. Thereby the old man knew that it was by those seven successive victories he had merited the seven crowns of glory.—Rodriguez, *Chris., Perf.*, III., 130.

503. *The Temptation of a Young Man and an Old*

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Man.—There is no harm in being tempted, my friends, but there is in yielding to the temptation, however hard it be. A young solitary, being tormented by continual temptations against the holy virtue, applied to an old anchoret, and discovered to him the state of his soul, hoping to find consolation and the remedy for his evils in the counsels and good prayers of the old man. But the contrary was the case. This man, who had neither the prudence nor discretion that age usually gives, rebuked him sharply and sent him away with contempt. Much afflicted by this harshness and the severe reprimand he had received, the poor young man even thought no more of resisting the temptation, and busied himself only with the means of yielding to it. The Abbot Apollo, one of the holiest and most prudent solitaries that was then in the desert, met him on the way to the city, and judging the interior trouble by the emotion visible without, he asked him with much mildness what was the matter with him, and what was the cause of the sadness and confusion he saw on his face. But he was so deeply buried in his own thoughts that he made him no answer. The holy abbot, knowing still more by the disorder of his soul, insisted more strongly, and pressed him so that, at last, he obliged him to declare the agitation of mind in which he was, as also the injudicious reproaches of the old man. "That has so discouraged me," added he, "that despairing of being able to surmount my temptation, and to live as a true solitary, I have resolved to quit

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the desert, and return to settle in the world." After this painful avowal, St. Apollo began to console and encourage him, saying that he had himself combatted every day the same temptations, and that, in order to do so, there was no need in being disheartened nor lose courage; since, to overcome them, it is not on his own strength one should rely, but on the grace and mercy of God. He finally conjured him to put off for one day the carrying out of his resolution, and to return immediately to his cell to implore God's assistance. As the term he asked for was but one day, the young solitary consented. After that the pious abbot journeyed towards the cell of the cross old solitary; as soon as he came near it, he prostrated himself on the ground, and raising his hands to heaven, he addressed to God the following prayer: "Lord, Thou who knowest our strength and our weakness, Thou who art the sovereign physician of souls, grant that the temptation which afflicts this young man may pass into the heart of the old man, so that, at least in his old age, he may learn to have compassion on the weakness and troubles of his brethren!" Scarcely had he finished his prayer, when he saw a fiend, under the form of a hideous little negro, darting a fiery arrow into the old man's cell. The latter had no sooner felt the dart, than behold a tumult arises in his mind which he cannot quell even for a moment. He arises, he goes out, he goes in again, and after some time spent in this way, being no longer able to endure the flame that devoured him, he takes the same resolution

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as the young solitary, leaves his cell, and takes the same way to return to the world. The holy abbot who was observing him, and who knew by the vision he had the temptation that tormented him, approached him: "Whither are you going, father? how is it that, forgetting the gravity of your age and your profession, you are so agitated, and walk so fast?" The old man, who thought himself discovered, and the testimony of whose evil conscience filled him with shame and confusion, made no answer. Then the holy man, availing himself of the trouble in which he saw him, added: "Go back to your cell, my dear brother, and believe that, if the devil has hitherto left you in peace, it is because he knew you not, or made no account of you. And when some young monk comes to confide his troubles to you, receive him with kindness and compassion." St. Apollo completed this act of charity by praying for him, and his temptation instantly disappeared.—Père Marin, *Vies des Pères des Déserts.*

504. *Alypus at the Circus Games.*—"He that loves the danger shall perish therein," is said in Scripture; so, my dear friends, the best means of avoiding sin is to avoid even what might lead to it, such as plays, profane sports, dancing, bad books, &c. Hear what St. Augustine himself relates of his friend Alypus, a young man of excellent qualities, but who met with a grievous fall. Here is how it happened: Some of his young friends, who were studying law with him, going one day from dinner together, met him on the way,

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and undertook to take him with them to the amphitheatre. It was one of those fatal days when the people were delighted by the sight of human bloodshed. As he had an extreme horror of such cruel exhibitions, he at first resisted with all his strength. But the others, using that sort of violence which is sometimes done amongst friends, drew him away in spite of him; then he told them: "You may drag my body and place me amongst you in the amphitheatre, but you shall not dispose of my mind or my eyes, which will assuredly take no interest in the play. Thus I shall be there as though I was not there, and so I shall at once place myself above the violence you do me, and the passion that possesses you." But let Alypus say as he would they carried him off. Whilst the whole amphitheatre was in the transport of these barbarous pleasures, Alypus restrained his heart from taking part in them, and kept his eyes closed. Would to God that he had sealed his ears! For, having been struck by a great shout, which something extraordinary had raised, curiosity prevailed, and, intending only to see what it was, he opened his eyes . . . . . It was enough to give his heart a deeper wound than that which one of the combatants had just received. Thereby it was that heart, in which there was much more presumption than strength, and which was so much the weaker for having counted on itself, instead of expecting nothing but from God, found itself suddenly wounded. Cruelty glided in at the very moment

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when the blood just shed met his eyes; and, very far from turning them away from what was passing, he kept them fastened on it, drinking fury in long draughts without perceiving it, and allowing himself to be intoxicated by that barbarous and criminal pleasure. It was no longer the same man who had been dragged thither by force; it was a man of just the same stamp as all those who made up the crowd in the amphitheatre, and a fitting companion for those who had brought him. Behold him as fond of plays as the others, mingling his cries with theirs, becoming as warm and as much excited as any of them by what was passing. Finally, he left the place with such a passion for shows and games that he thought of nothing else, and not only was he ready to go back again with those who had brought him, but he was more infatuated than any of them, and even induced others to go. Sad proof, dear friends, of the truth of the words which I have just quoted for you: *He that loveth the danger shall perish therein*. —St. Augustine, *Confessions*, B. VI., Chap. 8.

505. *How the Devil is Resisted.*—You remember that Our Lord would allow Himself to be tempted by the devil in order to teach us how to resist him. When he had dared to transport Jesus to the pinnacle of the Temple, he plainly told Him: *Cast Thyself down!* "That is precisely," says St. Jerome, "the true language of the devil, because he desires nothing so much as the fall of men. He may well, indeed, persuade them to throw themselves down, but he cannot himself throw

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them down the precipice." The voice of the tempting devil tells us: "Do that and cast thyself into hell!" We ought to answer: "Wretch, go thyself, thou knowest the way. For me, I will have nothing to do with it." In fact, he cannot force us to do anything if we have not the will. A man feeling himself continually tormented by the devil, who was urging him to kill himself, revealed to his confessor the trouble and agitation of his mind. The confessor made him understand that the solicitations of the evil spirit could have no other power over him than that which he himself chose to give him; he added, by way of advice, that as often as he felt himself pressed by this temptation, he would content himself with saying: "Let me alone, I will have nothing to do with it." This man practised faithfully what his confessor had told him, and delivered himself, by that means, of the temptation that tormented him. At the end of eight days it had left him and he went to thank his confessor, with an overflowing heart, for the infallible remedy he had given him.—Rodriguez, *Chris. Perf.*, II., 65.

506. *How the Devil Fears the Lord's Prayer.*—We gain much more before God, my dear friends, by a single petition of the Lord's Prayer, made from the depth of the heart, than by the repetition of a great number of prayers said hastily, and without any attention. Take the following fact as a proof: St. Gregory, Bishop of Tours, relates that St. Calufran, a recluse, was long tormented by remorse, so that a gloomy despair, a dark hopeless grief, in a word, every

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trouble of the mind, accompanied him everywhere. The devils, under the form of horrible serpents, sometimes appeared to him in a visible manner, and so came to torment him even in his solitude. He tried every means of getting rid of these tortures and of those malignant spirits, but without being able to succeed. At length he bethought him of trying the Lord's Prayer. He, accordingly, recited the "Our Father," dwelling long on each petition, and repeating it several times. Well, this means succeeded perfectly, and as often as he pronounced the words "but deliver us from evil," he felt peace springing up in his soul, and the serpents that surrounded him, often twisting themselves around his neck as if to stifle him, went hissing away. Sometimes the devil was heard to let fall this avowal, "Be silent, will you? that prayer is a torment to us!"—St. Gregory of Tours, *Glory of Confessors.*

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CHAPTER IV.

THE ANGELICAL SALUTATION.

I.—THE HAIL MARY AND THE ANGELUS.

507. *The "Hail Mary" Engraved on a Ring.*—St. Edmus, or Edmund, who became Archbishop of Canterbury, in England, had been brought up with a great devotion to the Most Holy Virgin. When sending him to Paris to make his studies, his mother recommended to him to never let a day pass without having recourse to his divine protectress. That virtuous mother often wrote to him to avoid bad company, and to frequent the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist; often, too, she sent him instruments of penance, to repress, she said, the bad inclinations that might injure his virtue. The holy young man, docile to the counsels of his mother, always showed himself most zealous for the glory of the Virgin Mary. He went several times a day to prostrate himself before one of her statues, and to mark his engagement in the service of the Queen of Angels, he placed on the finger of one of her statues a ring, on which he had caused to be engraved the whole of the Angelical Salutation. You shall see how agreeable that devotion, so

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sincere and so persevering, was to the Blessed Virgin. After the death of the blessed Edmund, it was remarked that the same prayer was engraved on his episcopal ring, to which that prayer communicated a virtue so efficacious and so miraculous, that it was subsequently used to operate a great number of cures. It was sometimes sufficient to make the sick touch it and they were instantly cured. If we do not engrave the words of the *Hail Mary* on a ring, my dear friends, let us engrave them on our hearts, and that will be still better.—NOEL, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 201.

508. *The "Hail Mary" Recited by an Impure Mouth.*—One must be in a state of grace, my dear friends, to say his prayers well. Hence, it is not fitting that the holy words of the *Hail Mary*, for instance, should pass through impure lips. It is with a heart free from sin that we ought to pray to the Blessed Virgin, who never committed the least fault. St. Peter Celestine relates that a certain military man was accustomed to address, every day, some prayers to the Blessed Virgin, although he was given up to all sorts of crimes. It was a custom he had from his mother, and from which he never departed. One day, after a bloody battle, having been obliged to fly, he found himself alone in a desert, deprived of all assistance, and even on the point of dying with hunger. He took a notion to address himself to Mary, that she might come to help him in his extreme misery. The Blessed Virgin deigned to appear to him, and presented him some delicious food, but on a plate so

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foul, so disgusting, that he dared not touch it. "Take this food," said the Queen of Saints to him. "Oh! I cannot—I cannot even look at it in that filthy vessel." "What!" said the Holy Virgin, "you are unwilling to take this meat out of the vessel in which I offer it to you, and you would have me receive your prayers, which proceed from a heart defiled with iniquity and from a mouth full of lies, blasphemy, and obscenity? Go, unhappy man, commence by purifying yourself of your crimes, by a sincere confession, and then you may come to offer me your prayers." The soldier, ashamed and confused, then understood the meaning of that vision; he took courage, left the desert, confessed his sins with tears of repentance, and persevered till death in his pious practices.—Noel, *Cat. de Rodez*, III., 219.

509. *The Tepidity of Thomas à Kempis.*—Let us persevere, dear friends, in our devotion towards the Blessed Virgin, because, if we forget her, she will herself forget us. It is related that the pious Thomas à Kempis,—whom some authors regard as the author of that admirable book *The Imitation of Christ*,—was a faithful servant of Mary; above all, he had the pious custom of saluting her often with the angel by the *Hail Mary*. When he passed an image of his divine protectress, he said to her from the bottom of his heart: "Hail Mary!" By this means he obtained many graces for his soul, and became a child of benediction. Nevertheless, some companions, with whom he was not sufficiently on his guard, having by little

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and little turned him away from his devotion to the Blessed Virgin, he soon felt it slacken; he had no longer the same ardor for prayer, for communion, for study. It required a miraculous vision to bring him back to his study. One night, in a dream, he thought he saw Mary, who was pleased to shed a thousand graces on several of his fellow-students. He anxiously awaited his turn to receive the same favors, but the Blessed Virgin presenting herself before him: "What do you expect," said she in a stern voice, "you who have ceased to salute me? What has become of those *Aves* you used so often to address to me? Go, ingrate, you no longer deserve my protection!" Thomas awoke and immediately resumed his accustomed prayers. He long wept his past tepidity, and shunned, with particular care, the company of young people who did not love Mary, and who turned others away from her devotion: there is nothing but ruin to be met with those unfortunates.—DEBUSSI, *Nouveau Mois de Marie.*

510. *The Victory of Belgrade.*—You all know what the *Angelus* is, dear friends, but, perhaps, you are not acquainted with its origin. The custom of ringing it in the middle of the day is due, in part, to a remarkable event which I am going to relate to you. In 1456, the city of Belgrade, on the Danube, on the frontiers of Turkey, was besieged by the Turks, who kept battering its walls for four months without avail. The Sultan, desperate at seeing so many efforts remain unfruitful, resolved to make a general assault. For

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twenty hours they fought with unequalled fury, and those who defended the city were exhausted and overcome by a long and obstinate resistance. At that moment there was seen advancing a pious and courageous Franciscan, St. John de Capistran; he presented himself to the soldiers, crucifix in hand, and prayed God and the Blessed Virgin to come to their assistance. This was his prayer: "Alas! powerful Queen of Heaven, will thou abandon thy children to the fury of the infidels, who never cease to insult and outrage thy Divine Son? Where is now the God of the Christians?" And praying thus, he shed a torrent of tears. Animated by the prayers and tears of the holy man, the Christians darted, with prodigious impetuosity, on the Turks, who were already penetrating into the city, massacred several thousands of them and put the rest to flight. This victory, as glorious as it was unexpected, could only be attributed to the assistance of Heaven, and especially to the intercession of Mary. At the news of this success, Pope Calixtus III. ordained that in all the churches of Christendom solemn thanksgivings should be made to God and the Blessed Virgin. To perpetuate forever the memory of this great benefit, and to inflame more and more the courage of Christians, the same Pope ordained that, in all Catholic countries, the bell should be rung for the recitation of the *Angelus*, between two and three o'clock in the afternoon, the time when the victory of Belgrade had been obtained over the Turks. In

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after times, this signal was transferred to the hour of noon, the better to divide the day, but the memory of the miraculous protection of the Blessed Virgin was ever associated with it.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 523.

511. *The Last Mercy of a "Hail Mary."*—One would never come to an end, dear children, were they to relate all the prodigies wrought by the Angelical Salutation. At the time when St. Francis Borgia was in Rome, a great sinner presented himself before him. He found the man in such a disorderly state, that he dared not take on himself the charge of his conscience; he sent him to Father Acosta, who was very enlightened in the direction of souls. Here is what he was told by that unhappy man, who permitted the confessor to make it public in order to show forth the divine mercy. "Father, since my earliest years, I have always had religion; I prayed to Mary; I saluted her unceasingly; I went often to communion; but, in the depth of my heart, I was bad and base, and had the misfortune to conceal my worst sins in confession; I thus heaped crime on crime, sacrilege on sacrilege. Sometimes I promised to correct myself; but, as soon as opportunity offered, I fell again into my shameful crimes. Several times when I went to Communion, Jesus Christ deigned to reveal Himself to me, and said: "Why, oh unhappy man! dost thou use Me so ill, I who have done so much good for thee? Is it not enough to have been crucified by the Jews? must I find a new Calvary in

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thy heart?" Habituated to sin, I was insensible to so many warnings. Here is the last proof of many on the part of my God: This morning, I thought my guardian angel appeared to me; he presented me with a consecrated host and said to me: "Knowest thou this Saviour God who has loaded thee with blessings, and whom thou profanest for so many years? This is the punishment of thy ingratitude?" Saying these words, he seized a sword to put me to death. As it were beside myself, and seeing that I was about to be lost forever, I cried out: "Hail Mary! thou alone canst save me!" The angel answered: "It is the last mercy of God in thy regard; God, in consideration of the protection of our Queen, allows you to live some time longer on earth to expiate your sins." Having finished this recital, the unhappy sinner was silent; the reverend father Acosta consoled him the best he could, but he made him so sensible of his position, that he took upon himself a severe penance to last as long as his life.—Noel, *Cat. de Rodez.*, III., 203.

512. *A Missionary Six Years Old.*—I never read any missionary story that impressed me so much as the following. I am going to tell it to you, my dear children, just as I read it: In a voyage of exploration and discovery on the coast of Africa, landing on a little island, near that which is mentioned on the charts by the names of Fernando Po and Annobon, some missionaries met on a rock, not far from the shore, a cross rudely constructed, and all around, in

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the attitude of prayer, a group of negro children, directed by another white child. They were nearly all of the same age, and were reciting in bad Spanish the Angelical Salutation or *Hail Mary*. Great was the surprise of the Catholic missionaries to meet in those regions, where they thought the idea of the cross was unknown, an altar raised to the cross. On seeing those good priests wearing their soutanes, the child cried out in Spanish: *Priests! here are priests!* and all the little negroes turned towards the missionaries. The latter approached the child and asked him to conduct them to the house of his parents. "I have none," answered the child, sadly. Then he told how being cast on that shore by a shipwreck, he was separated from his parents, whom he never saw again. Picked up by some negroes, who had brought him up with their children, he had taught the latter the prayer his mother taught him to say morning and night on his knees, and they came all together to kneel before that cross. "They are, then, Christians?" demanded the missionaries. "Christians!" repeated the child, much amazed; "I cannot tell you; they see me kneel down, and they do the same. They repeat the words of the prayer I have taught them; but I do not know whether they understand it, as I do not understand their language. Still I have taught them to make the sign of the cross, and they never fail to do it when they pass before the cross." "And that cross—who raised it?" "It was I; I remembered those I had seen from place to place in my own

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country." Finishing his recital, the poor child could not restrain his tears and sighs. The missionaries asked his name; he remembered neither his own name nor that of his country; neither did he know the name of the shipwrecked vessel. One thing only he had not forgotten: his *Hail Mary!* Well, dear friends, when will it be that little missionaries such as this charming child of whom I have told you may be found amongst you?—Mullois, *Mois de Marie de tout le Monde*, 114.

II.—ON THE ROSARY AND BEADS.

513. *First Origin of the Beads.*—The institution of the beads is generally attributed to St. Dominick; nevertheless, children, the custom of repeating several times the Lord's Prayer and the Angelical Salutation is much more ancient. Thus, in the first ages of the Church, those who could take no part in the ordinary prayer, and especially in the singing of the Psalms, were exhorted to recite instead thereof the *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* a certain number of times. Speaking of this, Palladius and Sozomenes relate that St. Paul, a celebrated abbot of Libya, who lived in the time of St. Anthony, repeated the same prayer a hundred times in the day, and that he made use of small stones to count them. In like manner, St. Benedict, founder of the Order of Benedictines, was accustomed to recite, during work, instead of the Hours of the Ecclesiastical Office, *Paters* and *Aves*.

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To reckon them he made use of little balls, fastened together by a thread. Finally, children, to quote you another very curious fact, when they exhumed the body of St. Gertrude, who died in 667, they found beside her in her tomb little balls strung together by a thin twine. This proves that even then Christians used, as they now do, a sort of rosary or chaplet, to determine the number of *Paters* and *Aves* they intended to recite. A custom so ancient and so pious should not then be regarded with indifference.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 536.

514. *St. Dominick Institutes the Rosary.*—The common opinion, dear friends, is that it was St. Dominick who instituted the rosary as it is now recited. This was the occasion. That great Saint, who died in 1221, had long preached, in the south of France, against the error of the Albigenses. Despairing of the success of his efforts, he had recourse to the Blessed Virgin, and never ceased praying and beseeching her till his prayer was heard. With this intent he set out for Toulouse, retired to a lonely forest, fell on his knees, and urgently besought God and the Blessed Virgin that they might help him to overcome the enemies of the faith. He passed three successive days and nights in prayer—at the end of that time, he fell down from weakness, and the holy Mother of God appeared to him, in an ecstacy, surrounded with glory and magnificence. She was escorted by three queens, and each of them surrounded by fifty virgins, as if to serve her. The first queen

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with her companions, was robed in white, the second in red, and the third wore a tissue of the most dazzling gold. The Blessed Virgin explained to St. Dominick the meaning of these symbols. "These queens," said she, "represent the three chaplets; the fifty virgins, who form the train of each queen, represent the fifty *Hail Marys* of each rosary; finally, the white color reminds you of the joyful mysteries; the red color, of the sorrowful mysteries, and the gold color, of the glorious mysteries. The mysteries of the Incarnation, birth, life and passion of my Divine Son, together with those of His resurrection, and His glorification, are contained, and as it were enshrined, in the Angelical Salutation and the Lord's Prayer. That is just the rosary; that is to say, the crown wherein I shall place all my joy; spread that prayer everywhere, and the heretics will be converted, and the faithful shall persevere and obtain eternal life." Consoled, and, as it were, ravished by such an apparition, St. Dominick quickly returned to the city of Toulouse and repaired to the church. During this time, as a pious legend relates, the bells began to ring of themselves. The inhabitants, astonished to hear bells at such an unusual hour, ran in crowds to the temple of the Lord, and asked what it meant. Then St. Dominick ascended the pulpit, and after having spoken with thrilling eloquence of the justice of God and the rigor of His judgments, he declared that, to avoid them, there was no means easier or surer than to invoke the Mother of Mercy, to do

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penance, and recite the rosary. He immediately gave an explanation of that beautiful prayer, and began to say it aloud. The effects of this devotion were soon felt. Many renounced their errors, did penance, and returned to the Catholic Church. St. Dominick afterwards established the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, a practice which spread rapidly amongst Christians. Finally, Pope Sixtus IV., who was elected in 1471, and several of his successors, attached to it numerous and rich indulgences.—Père LACORDAIRE, *Life of St. Dominick.*

515. *A Parisian Converted by the Beads.*—One of the first miracles obtained by the rosary, or the chaplet, was that which I am going to relate to you, children: About the year 1219, St. Dominick, with his accustomed zeal, was preaching at Paris the mysteries of the holy rosary, and thereby wrought a great number of conversions. One of the most remarkable was that of a lord, distinguished by his rank and his great wealth, but whose scandalous and disorderly life formed a painful contrast to the virtues of his wife, who enjoyed a great reputation for piety. In the trouble she had experienced, this pious lady felt herself inspired to consult St. Dominick, and the latter, according to his custom, had at first recourse to the new devotion of the rosary. He explained the virtue of it to this lady, promised her happy effects from it, and made her a present of the modest chaplet he had been using himself, exhorting her to recite it devoutly for the conversion of her husband.

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Happy in possessing so rich a treasure, the lady returned home full of joy, and began to recite the rosary with all imaginable fervor. The Mother of Mercy soon heard her prayers; for, during three successive nights, her husband, who had hitherto remained callous and indifferent, was cruelly disturbed in his sleep, having continually before his eyes the terrible chastisements reserved in the other life for libertines and scandalous sinners. Recognizing in that singular impression a warning from heaven, and inwardly touched by grace, he entered into himself and deplored his sins; then, throwing himself all in tears into the arms of his pious wife, he promised her to lead a more Christian life for the time to come. This was not all: he came to St. Dominick, made at his feet a general and sincere confession, in which he gave every mark of perfect contrition. Soon after he even asked to be admitted into the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, and there so distinguished himself by his zeal and fervor, that his example contributed much to spread that beautiful devotion in Paris, and throughout all France. Finally, after several years passed in the practice of the Christian virtues, he gave up his soul to God, on the same day as his virtuous wife, and they were buried in the same grave.—Des Billiers, *Manuel du Saint Rosaire*, 39.

516. *The Slave Carried off by Algerine Pirates.*—You all have a rosary, dear friends; so much the better, it is a treasure the full value of which you do not know. Listen: In 1522, a young man of Span-

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ish origin, and much devoted to the Blessed Virgin was carried off by sea-rovers, whilst on his way to Genoa in Italy. The pirates took him to Algiers, where, for three years, he had to undergo all the hardships of the most barbarous captivity. During all this time, he was no less zealous than before in discharging, as far as possible, his religious duties; but, above all, he let no day pass without reciting the whole chaplet, that is to say, five decades of the rosary. He thought, and with good reason, that it was a most efficacious means of recovering his freedom, and working out his soul's salvation. He knew that his parents were not in a state to pay the enormous price which the barbarous tyrant, whose slave he was, demanded for his ransom; so, deprived of all human succor, there only remained to him that of the Blessed Virgin, who is the common mother of Christians. He ceased not to ask her for his deliverance, principally on account of his faith, which he saw every day assailed by promises and by threats. The fear of becoming an infidel overwhelmed him with sorrow, and inspired him with the liveliest desire of again beholding his country, where he might freely practise his religion. Continually occupied with these thoughts, he at length forms, with one of his companions in slavery, the project of escaping. They succeed in unfastening their chains, notwithstanding the vigilance of the guards, and set out together on a dangerous and unknown way. Without provisions, having no other food than the grass, or drink than the water

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they might chance to meet, they lay concealed during the day and travelled only in the night. At last, without other support than the rosary, and the assistance of Mary, who protected her two servants, they escaped the armed men sent in pursuit of them, swam across two rivers, and, amid the greatest dangers, arrived in safety at a city inhabited by Christians, whence they could return to Spain. They hastened to tell how they owed their deliverance to the devotion of the rosary, which they strove to spread with all the zeal which gratitude inspires. The young Spaniard even composed some verses in praise of the Mother of God, which were read by many persons who have cherished the remembrance of this so miraculous fact.—Des Billiers, *Man. du Saint Rosaire*, 41.

517. *The Battle of Lepanto.*—The most extraordinary fact in relation to the holy rosary, dear friends, is, unquestionably, the following: In 1571 the Christians, under the command of Don Juan of Austria, engaged with the Turks under Hali in a naval combat near Lepanto, in Greece. There was a crusade against the Mussulmans. From the departure of the fleet, the holy Pope Pius V. ceased not a single moment to implore the Blessed Virgin, and address the Lord in fervent prayer, that He might deign to grant the Christians a victory over the enemies of the faith. He ordered the same to be done in all the monasteries, and all Christendom followed the example. The holy rosary, especially, was frequently and fervently recited. At length, on the 7th of

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October, the two armies came together; it was about four in the afternoon. The Christians were not long without perceiving that an invisible hand protected them, for the sun and the wind which had before incommoded them soon became to them a perfect means of safety. Gradually the sun turned full on the eyes of the infidels, and the wind, suddenly changing, sent the smoke of the artillery full in their faces. The combat lasted four hours. On every side, as far as the eye could reach, the surface of the sea was seen covered with blood, dead bodies, sails, and fragments of vessels; the defeat of the Turks was general and complete. They lost thirty thousand men, and three thousand five hundred others, twenty-five of whom were of high birth, were taken prisoners. One hundred and thirty vessels fell into the power of the Christians; the rest were either broken to pieces against the rocks, devoured by the flames, or sent to the bottom; a very small number succeeded in escaping. On board the vessels seized by the conquerors were found fifteen thousand poor Christians, reduced to slavery, but whose chains were, of course, broken that instant. During that glorious battle the Pope never ceased praying; he also followed in spirit the phases of the combat; and, by a prophetic spirit, he knew the same evening that the Christians were victorious. In thanksgiving, he ordained, to perpetuate the memory thereof, that for all future time the feast of Our Lady of Victories should be celebrated, and that these

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words should be added to the Litany of the Blessed Virgin: *Help of Christians, pray for us!* And as the devotion of the rosary was one of the means employed by the holy pontiff to implore the assistance of the Blessed Virgin in this circumstance, he decreed that, on the day of the feast of Our Lady of Victories, that of the rosary should likewise be celebrated. Under his successor, Gregory XIII., the feast of the Rosary was definitively fixed for the first Sunday of October, and so it still is throughout the whole Christian Church.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 527.

518. *Great Men Saying Their Beads.*—It is sometimes said, my dear friends, that the beads is a devotion only fit for women. You are about to see how true that is: The illustrious Bossuet, one of the greatest geniuses of the time of Louis XIV., not only recited the rosary assiduously, but also had himself enrolled in the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, at the Dominican Convent, in the Rue St. Jacques, in Paris, on the 10th of August, 1680. In his train we may range all the institutors or reformers of modern congregations: St. Francis de Sales, St. Vincent de Paul, the Venerable Jean Baptiste de la Salle, the learned Cardinal de Berulle, the pious Olier, founder and first Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, with a crowd of others. Better than that, dear children, the kings and the great ones of the world have imitated these celebrated men. I can quote for you Edward III., King of England, the Emperor Charles

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the Fifth, Sigismund and Casimir, Kings of Poland, St. Louis, Francis the First, Louis XIV., Louis XVI., and several other Kings of France, who made public profession of that devotion. Father de la Rue, a learned religious of the Company of Jesus, relates that one day being admitted to an audience by Louis XIV., he found him saying his beads. The religious could not help showing his surprise. "You appear surprised," said the King, "to see me saying the rosary; I glory in saying it; it is a pious custom which I have from the Queen, my mother, and I should be very sorry to miss a single day without discharging that duty." How beautiful is this! how admirable, dear friends! Let us not be ashamed, then, of a devotion which has been that of so many great men.—DES BILLIERS, *Manuel du Saint Rosaire*, 47—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 453.

519. *What use is the Rosary to a Sinner?*—Oh! dear friends, how happy we should be, if we were faithful in passing no day without doing something to honor the Blessed Virgin! She would reward us well. One of the most celebrated preachers of the last century was called by night, in Paris, to hear the confession of a young gentleman who had been struck with apoplexy. At the dawn of day he celebrated to his intention a Votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin. Just as he was finishing, word was brought him that the patient's consciousness had returned. He goes to him in all haste, and finds him penetrated with the liveliest sentiments of penance and compunction,

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generously offering up his life in expiation of his sins. He makes his confession, and receives the last Sacraments with the greatest piety. The confessor, equally surprised and penetrated with gratitude, knew not to what to attribute so great a prodigy of mercy, on behalf of a man whose excesses were, unhappily, but too well known. He interrogates the patient; the latter answers in a voice broken with sobs: "Alas! Father, I can only attribute that grace, so precious, to the mercy of God. He has, doubtless, had regard to your prayers and those of my poor mother. When she was at the point of death, she had me brought to her bedside, and, after expressing her apprehensions concerning the dangers I should meet in the world, she addressed me in these words: "I leave you under the protection of the Blessed Virgin; promise me, my dear son, that you will do the only thing I have to ask of you, as a pledge of your affection for me!—it is to say the beads every day. I promised, Father, and I faithfully kept my word; I said the rosary regularly every day. I confess it is the only act of religion that I have performed these ten years past." The confessor had, then, no doubt that his penitent owed to the powerful protection of Mary the lively sentiments of contrition which animated him on that occasion. He never left him till he breathed his last, and he had the happiness of seeing him die in the most touching dispositions. Behold, dear friends, how the recitation of some decades of the rosary, which takes only a few minutes in the day, will pro-

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cure for us inestimable graces.—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.* 453.

520. *Assassins in Presence of a Rosary.*—Here is one of the most striking stories I know concerning the rosary; listen to it attentively. Mr. Walter de Claubry, a medical doctor, had himself inscribed on the register of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary in the Church of St. Thomas Aquinas in Paris; it was in 1805. He set out that same year for the army, as military surgeon, but resolved to fulfil on all occasions his duties as a Christian and an associate of the Holy Rosary. Faithful to his engagement, amid all the perils of seduction, he was rewarded by receiving an assistance from the Blessed Virgin which may be truly called miraculous. In 1808, he was in Madrid, the capital of Spain, at the breaking out of that famous insurrection of the 2d of May, in which the Spanish people massacred, without pity, for several hours, all the Frenchmen they could meet. The day before, which was the first Sunday of that month, Mr. Walter, according to the custom of the fervent associates, had received Holy Communion in honor of the Blessed Virgin, in a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Loretto, and served by an emigrant French priest. On the morrow, the day of the insurrection, knowing nothing of what was going on, he leaves his lodgings to repair to his post. But he soon falls in with a furious band, armed with sabres, knives, and daggers; they recognize him for a French officer, they handle him roughly, and are even about to kill

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him. In this peril his first care was to recommend himself to God and implore the protection of the Blessed Virgin for that terrible moment of death from which no human means could save him. Nevertheless, having heard that the Spaniards were vociferating against the French, and treated them as sacrilegious and impious, quicker than lightning a thought presented itself to his mind: "Why, no," said he, "I am not impious! Here is the proof." And immediately he draws from his pocket the rosary he always kept about him, at the end of which hung a silver medal blessed by Pope Pius VII., when he came to Paris, in 1804. At the sight of that rosary the murderers stop as if by magic. Still some among them remained irresolute, when a man presents himself in the midst of these insurgents and seems to speak to them earnestly. It was the sacristan of the Chapel of Our Lady of Loretto, who, frightened by the tumult, had closed its door and was going home. It seems as though he were sent expressly by Heaven, for, having recognized the French officer, he runs to defend him; he protests to the most furious that he is a truly pious man, that he confesses to Don Louis Dupuis, the emigrant priest of whom we just now spoke, and that he saw him at Communion the day before. Then, the men who were before going to kill him, load him with kindness, take his precious rosary, kiss it respectfully, make all present kiss it, then gave it back to himself; and you may think, dear friends, with what gratitude and fervor he

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kissed it; at length they conduct him to a place where his life was not likely to be in danger. "The more I reflect," said Mr. Claubry himself, "on the circumstances of this event, the more sensible I am that I owe my life to the protection of Our Lady of the Rosary." If this be not a miracle properly so called, it is, at least, a special proof of her powerful and gracious protection.—DES BILLIERS, *Manuel du Saint Rosaire*, 43.

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CHAPTER V.

DIVERS PRACTICES OF DEVOTION.

I.—CONGREGATIONS AND CONFRATERNITIES.

521. *The Two Visions of St. Anselm.*—People of the world little think, children, the happiness there is in belonging entirely to God, whether in a religious order, or a pious congregation. This instance will give you some faint idea of it. It is related that St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, in England, was one day ravished into an ecstacy. He seemed to see a great river, into which was thrown all the filth and ordure of the world. The waters were so foul and so putrid that nothing like it could be imagined, and its course was so rapid and so impetuous, that it carried off all it met, men and women, rich and poor, young and old, continually casting them down to the bottom, and throwing them up again, then casting them down again, without leaving them a moment's relaxation. The Saint, astonished at this sight and surprised to see that those who were in the river were all the time alive, asked how they could live, and on what. He was told that they lived only on the filth and the muddy water in which they

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were plunged, and that they seemed to be fully satisfied with that. This vision was afterwards explained to him, and he was told that this rapid river was the world, in which men, plunged in vice and carried away by their passions, live in such a strange blindness that, although the continual agitation in which they are never allows them to find rest or peace, they fail not to think themselves happy. After that St. Anselm was ravished in spirit into a most spacious park, the walls of which were covered with plates of silver that shone refulgent from afar. In the middle there was a meadow, the grass of which was all of gold, but so soft and so fresh that it easily bent when any one wished to sit down upon it, and without ever appearing withered it returned to its former state as soon as they arose. The air one breathed there was ever pure and mild; all, in short, was so smiling and so agreeable that it seemed to be a terrestrial paradise, with nothing wanting to supreme felicity. The Saint having again asked the meaning of this vision, he was told that it was a simple representation of the religious life, and the tranquillity enjoyed by those who have left the world, to attach themselves solely to the service of God.—Rodriguez, *Chris. Perf.*, I., 196.

522. *The Visions of a Dominican Monk.*—It is not enough, my friends, to belong to a confraternity, a congregation, or even a religious order, one must fulfil the duties thereof with fervor and fidelity. The Venerable Humbert, an illustrious personage and General of the Order of Dominicans, relates that

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one of his religious appeared to one of his brethren some days after he was dead. He was radiant with glory, and appeared to be already in possession of celestial happiness. Having taken this monk from his cell he showed him in the country a great number of men clothed in white and surrounded with light; they all appeared to carry beautiful crosses on their shoulders, and were walking to heaven in procession. He afterwards showed him others, who were walking in the same way, but were much more dazzling with light than the first, and had each, in his hand, a cross much richer and finer. After that there passed a third procession, incomparably more radiant and more wonderful than the two others; all the crosses were, moreover, of amazing beauty, and whereas the men of the two other troops carried theirs themselves, either on their shoulders, or in their hand, the latter had each an angel who carried their cross before them, so that they might walk with more ease, and follow more joyfully the way to heaven. The monk, astonished by this vision, asked his blessed companion what it meant. "The first," said he, "those whom you have seen carrying the cross on their shoulders, are those who have entered into religion when already advanced in life; the second, that is to say, those who hold it in their hand, are religious who quitted the world whilst still young; finally, the last, whom you have seen walk so steadily, are those who, in early youth, embraced the religious life, renouncing for it all the vanities of

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the world." After this interesting explanation, the blessed soul disappeared. Let that serve for us, my friends!—it is, moreover, a new application of what the Scripture says: "Blessed are they who have borne the yoke of the Lord from their youth!"—Rodriguez, *Chris. Perf.*, I., 189.

523. *A Man Who Cannot be Hung.*—However long my story may be, it is so interesting, dear children, that I have a great mind to tell it to you. In it you will see a new proof of the protection of the Blessed Virgin for those who are hers with all their heart. The blessed Peter d'Armangaud, a religious of the Order of Mercy for the redemption of captives, had come to Bougie, a celebrated town of Algeria, to redeem a certain number of slaves. Like a truly charitable man, he voluntarily engaged to remain as a hostage for the deliverance of some of those poor captives, till his companion, William of Florence, who conducted them to Spain, should return with their ransom. During those days his zeal was not only employed with the captives, he even preached the Gospel to the Mussulmans. This was an unpardonable crime. Condemned to be hung, they took him from his dungeon, brought him outside the city, and there, in sight of all the people, he was hung, and left swinging so long on the gallows that the executioner thought him dead when he quitted him. He was left hanging to serve as a public example, and to glut the rage of those who had compassed his death, who would have his body left as a prey for crows and

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other birds of prey. Six days after the execution the venerable William of Florence, his companion, who had conducted the slaves to Spain and brought back their ransom, landed at the port of Bougie, with the thousand ducats (about ten thousand francs) which he had received. On his arrival the Turks so ordered matters at the port that he knew nothing of what had befallen his companion till they had received his money before he had learned his death. He walked into the city, his heart full of joy, in the hope of going to embrace him; but, alas! it was soon changed to tears and sighs, when, inquiring of some persons as to the state of his health, they told him in a whisper that he had been hung. It was no use to reproach the Turks with their cruelty and avarice; they told him, to justify themselves, that his companion having spoken ill of Mahomet, their great prophet, and of his Koran, and having even converted some Moors, he had drawn this punishment upon himself. William, sensibly afflicted by their precipitation, besought them to permit him, at least, to remove his body from the gibbet to bury it, which they did. He went to the place where he had been executed, accompanied by several Turks and some sailors from the bark which had brought him to Bougie. When he saw afar off the body of his companion still hanging on the gibbet, he abandoned himself to the most bitter sorrow. Arrived before the instrument of torture, he could not help expressing aloud to the saint the grievous sorrow his death had caused him. But what was his sur-

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prise to hear St. Peter d'Armangaud, that is to say, the monk who had been hung, say to him: "My dear Father, be not afflicted; I am living, by the grace of God, and the all-powerful protection of the Blessed Virgin. The Turks, with all their efforts, could not put me to death, because that Mother of Goodness defended me from their violence, and prevented the rope that encircled my neck from strangling me. In fact, she had the goodness to support me invisibly so that the weight of my body might not suffocate me. Ah! how profitable it is to suffer in this world for the love and cause of our God, who protects by such splendid miracles those who hope in Him! Not only have I suffered no pain, but I have felt ineffable joys in the depth of my soul during the six days that I have been fastened to this gibbet." At these words the venerable William changed his tears of sadness into tears of joy, and his lamentations into thanksgivings; assisted by those who had accompanied him, he took down St. Peter d'Armangaud from the gallows, to embrace him and manifest all the pleasure he felt in seeing him alive. This astounding prodigy so struck many of the Moors and Turks that they were converted and asked for baptism. The report of this miracle having spread throughout all the city of Bougie, the people all went to see the holy martyr, every one wishing to be an eye-witness of such an unprecedented wonder, as extraordinary as the resurrection of one from the dead. Meanwhile Father William of Florence went to re-

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claim his thousand ducats, since the slave-owners who had received them had no right to them, because of the injustice they had done in putting the Saint to death. The affair was brought before the divan or council, who, wishing to make some reparation to St. Peter d'Armangaud, restored twenty-six other slaves to liberty in return for that money. The resuscitated Saint brought them immediately to Barcelona, where he was received as a living martyr, with extraordinary ceremonies, and the acclamations of all the people who could not sufficiently adore the power and the goodness of God in so miraculous a preservation. To prove, in some sort, the truth of this prodigy, God permitted it so that his neck remained slightly twisted all the rest of his life, and his face retained such a paleness that he was more like a skeleton than a living man.—PAVY, *Hist. du Culte de la Ste. Vierge en Afrique.*

524. *The Blind Capuchin of Messina.*—My story will be a little long to-day, my very dear friends, but it is so interesting that you will find it still too short. Besides it is about the Blessed Virgin, a subject that is always pleasing to pious hearts like yours. In 1848, Sicily having revolted against its sovereign, the King of Naples, the latter was obliged, as it were, to make a conquest of it. Messina was invested. That large and beautiful city was soon carried by assault by the Neapolitan troops, who besieged it for five days, and entered, victorious and exasperated, by the Southern suburb. It was Thursday, the 7th Septem-

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ber, the eve of the great Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. The Sicilian sick had been transported to the northern part of the city, to a convent of Capuchins, situated not far from the sea-shore. The enemy's approach was no sooner known than all the wounded rise up, crowd together, and fly as fast as they can, hoping to gain the open country, and thus escape more surely a vengeance which they dreaded, perhaps with good reason. The monks themselves, following the impulse and the terror of the moment, had placed themselves, by flight, beyond the reach of danger. The shots of the combatants were heard in the distance; the roar of artillery echoed around; the shouts of the multitude mingled with this horrible tumult, increasing it by their thousand discords. Death seemed to hover over that rich and large city, peopled with nearly a hundred thousand inhabitants. An invalid remained standing in the long gallery of the convent, hardly able to drag himself after the others, who were already far away. This man, who was a Frenchman, had had his arm and shoulder carried off by a ball, some days before; he had lost much blood, and, consequently, almost all his strength. He was alone, and despair gradually took possession of him, all the more poignant as the wretched man heard more distinctly the threatening shouts of the approaching soldiers. Incapable at last of going farther, he stretches himself on the ground to undergo the fate which appeared inevitable. But, the moment his head came against the wall, it touches a door

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which opens and gives him a view into a monk's cell. He looks around. A poor white-haired monk was kneeling at the foot of a crucifix, absorbed in prayer, and, doubtless, offering up to God the sacrifice of his life. "Save me, Father!" cried the wounded man; "I can no longer support myself; my blood is beginning to flow, I have no strength, I am going to die here. Save me, in pity, save me!" "Alas! my child," answers the old man, "what can I do? I am blind; they have abandoned me as they have you; I do not regret life; but you, my son, by your voice it seems to me that you are young; you must fly. Do you hear how death is approaching us? Fly! fly!" "Father, I am falling! I am dying! I cannot possibly move another step!——" And he actually fell to the ground. The venerable monk, clasping his hands and raising his sightless eyes to heaven: "Well!" cried he, as if inspired, "in the name of that Holy Virgin," pointing to a small statue of the Blessed Virgin, "I command you to walk! You shall be saved by Mary!" On the instant, the wounded man feels his weakness no more; he raises himself as if supported by an invisible hand; he goes out, traverses the long avenues, arrives at the sea-shore, still under the impression of the miraculous word. There he meets a little child of eight years, who undertakes to find him a boat, makes him go on board, and rows him himself to a vessel that is lying not far from Messina. It was with tears of grateful affection that the man told me himself this touching story; I promised him that it

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should not be forgotten. As for the old monk, I never knew what became of him. If he perished in the massacre, and I am fain to think he did not, he crowned by martyrdom a life wholly devoted to virtue and to God. What fate could be more enviable?—Abbé V. Postel, *Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. LXXXVI., 5.

525. *The Vow of Two Little Savoyards.*—One of the titles under which the Blessed Virgin is the oftenest invoked, dear friends, is that of Our Lady of Help, or of Good Aid. I have read the following charming story on that subject: About the end of the month of November, 1848, Jean and Marin, two little Savoyard brothers, scarcely twelve years old, after having been blessed by their mother, and having received from her hands a medal of the Blessed Virgin, which they wore round their neck, left their mountains, already covered with snow, to go to the rich plains of France. Journeying along, by steep and perilous paths, the poor children said to each other, as if to console and reassure each other: "We are very young to go so far all alone and without money. But we shall keep together, and pray to God and His Blessed Mother; God will watch over us and Mary will guide our steps; she will provide for all our wants, and preserve us from all evil; she is so good, so powerful! And why should we not do something to assist our poor mother who, ever since she has been a widow, has no bread to give our sister and our two little brothers?

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Ah! how they cried when we bade them farewell!" Thus it was that these charming children strove to encourage each other against the terror they began to feel, amid the immense forests and deep precipices by which they were surrounded, when they perceived at the foot of the mountain the Chapel of Our Lady of Help, which their mother had recommended to them to visit. Full of joy and confidence, they ran thither, and both kneeling on the same stone, animated by the same sentiment of love, of lively faith and pious confidence, they repeat together this simple and touching prayer to Her who has never been invoked in vain: "Good Virgin, take under thy care two little Savoyards, who are going to France, all alone by themselves without any support, seeking bread for their poor mother. We promise thee, good Mary, if we get there without any accident, to have a Mass said in thy honor, out of the first money we earn, for the relief of the suffering souls in purgatory." And the poor children, reassured by the vow they had just made to Mary, resume their way with new courage, and with the help of Her who is called the traveller's guide, arrive in safety at the end of their journey. No sooner are they arrived in France than they go to work, and as soon as they have earned twenty sous, they hasten to offer them to the first priest they meet, requesting him to say for them the Mass they had promised Mary, for having so wonderfully conducted them. Now Jean and Marin, by means of the gifts bestowed on them, have become

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little merchants. Perhaps they are in the way of making their fortune, and that fortune will be founded on twenty sous, but twenty sous consecrated to God and blessed by the Holy Virgin.—*Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. XXVII., 8.

526. *A Pupil of the Brothers Miraculously Cured.*—Here, my dear children, is an example very fit to inspire you with a great confidence in the Blessed Virgin; it is the extraordinary cure of the young Martin Crès, which may be regarded as quite miraculous. On the 27th of January, 1853, Martin Crès, a pupil of the Christian Brothers of Morières, near Avignon, in the department of Vaucluse, was attacked by a violent pain in the side. The disease increased with alarming rapidity, so that his parents feared for his life. The 28th and 29th the malady had become so serious that they lost all hope of saving him. On Sunday, the 30th January, having expressed a wish to see his master before he died, the Brother Director and the Brother of his class went to see him. They found him in a pitiable state, scarcely able to articulate a word. His teacher was grieved to lose a child who was a great comfort to him on account of his amiable qualities; but he did not despair and resolved to pray, in concert with all his pupils, for the boy's recovery. The prayers began, then, on the 2d of February; but, far from feeling any relief, Martin was, in a few days, reduced to the last extremity. He did not deceive himself with regard to the critical state in which he was; he, therefore, testified a desire

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to receive the sacraments. On Friday, the ninth day of the disease, they sent for his confessor, who, having heard his confession, administered to him the sacrament of penance. This pious child, seeing that the priest did not speak to him of communion, addressed him in these beautiful words: "Will you, then, allow me to die without having the happiness of making my first communion?" And these same words he repeated to his weeping parents, who never left him day or night; "Tell our reverend father," he added, "that I want to make my first communion, that I cannot die without having that inestimable happiness." Aware of his happy dispositions, that same evening his confessor paid him a second visit, and, edified by his good sentiments, he promised him that the next day but one, Saturday, a day consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, he would bring him the holy viaticum. Behold this charming child about to die; but are the prayers which his parents, his teachers, and his schoolmates have been for six days addressing to Mary to be all in vain? The case seemed hopeless; Saturday evening he lay stretched on his bed as though he were no longer of this world. But what was the surprise of all the family when, on the following morning, they perceived that a sudden change had been wrought in him! He is no longer sick, his cure is perfect, and if the father's prudence had not prevented it, his son would have assisted at Mass and Vespers. So Mary heard the prayers addressed to her for the patient's cure. Some days

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after he resumed the usual exercises of the class, and gave, as before, the example of all the virtues of a pious scholar, till the day when it pleased the Lord to try his patience anew. A month after this first illness, Martin Crès was put to a new proof: his limbs became quite ulcerated by a species of cancer, which, in a few days, covered them entirely, from the feet to the knees. His pains were excessive, and, without the protection of Mary, he would certainly have died of it, or at least remained lame all the rest of his life. The remedy which had before been found so effective was immediately employed: the prayers were repeated with great fervor. But this time the Blessed Virgin, doubtless, wished to show in a more special manner the favor she was to bestow, for the malady seemed to increase according as the prayers became more numerous and more fervent; so that he remained nearly four months with his legs ulcerated in such a pitiable manner that the sight of them brought tears to the eyes. When asked if he suffered, he answered only by words of submission to the will of God. How many times has he not been heard to say: "It is better to suffer something in this world and enjoy eternal happiness in heaven!" At length it was resolved to make a last novena for the little sufferer. It was to end on the 14th of June by a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Rochefort. Meanwhile the disease grew every day more serious, and the patient's sufferings still greater. How many times did his teacher surprise him shedding tears, which his intolerable

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pain forced from him! Then he told him to place all his confidence in Mary, and Crès answered: "Ah! how I long for Monday, the day of the pilgrimage!"—"You think you will be cured, then?"—As though his confidence had been called in question, he hastily answered: "Yes, I shall be cured, I shall suffer no more, I shall be entirely freed from my disease." The two last days of the novena the children of the classes said the beads with great fervor for his intention. The patient was present, and his sufferings were so intense that they forced the tears from his eyes, notwithstanding all he could do to repress them. His teacher seeing him in that state of suffering, told him, to console him, that he should soon be cured, and then he answered with a sweet smile: "Oh! how I wish it was to-morrow, the day of the pilgrimage!" He longed so ardently for the day that the night before he would not go to bed, for fear of forgetting himself. He set out on his pious journey at one o'clock in the morning; he had prepared himself for it by a good confession, as also all his comrades who had had, like himself, the happiness of making their first communion. Arrived at Rochefort, pious as an angel, he heard Mass, and received Holy Communion with the fervor of a seraph. Amazing to relate! the child who, for four months, could not kneel to say his prayers, because of his sores, was seen during the whole time of Mass, and also during the quarter of an hour of thanksgiving, prostrate on the ground, without suffering the least inconvenience;

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and some hours after, he was running over the mountains and through the steep rocks in the vicinity of Our Lady's shrine: he was cured! From that day forth remedies were laid aside: the disease had entirely disappeared, and the child never felt any symptom of it again.—*Recomp. Hebd.*, No. CLXIV., p. 5.

527. *A Shark in Presence of the Scapular.*—How happy you are, dear friends, to wear on your bosom a medal, a scapular, or some other livery which proves your piety towards the Blessed Virgin. It is a powerful weapon. Here is a new proof of it, which I have read in the *Catholic Magazine.* A few years ago a young sailor left the port of St. Malo, in the department of Ile-et-Vilaine, and set out for America. This young man, who belonged to a family that had for many years followed a seafaring life, was devout to Mary, and wore the scapular; he wore it trustingly and lovingly. Arrived at the end of his voyage, he went, after a few hours' rest, to bathe in the sea; they tried to dissuade him from his purpose, telling him that that coast was dangerous. He persisted, and gaily swam out from the shore, thinking of no danger. All at once he perceived, at a short distance, the frightful head of a shark ready to seize him. The young man shuddered; but, in one of those moments which contain a whole life, he raised his heart to heaven, seized his scapular, which he had not left off, brandished it in his left hand, and, showing it to the shark, endeavored to swim with his right hand. The monster had stopped,

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as though struck with blindness or paralysis, and the client of the Blessed Virgin continued to swim, protected by his celestial weapon; the shark made some attempts to follow him, but a secret force impeded his motions, and the young man happily reached the shore, where he fell prostrate, saying: *Hail Mary!* From that day forward, as often as he went on shipboard, he took scapulars with him, not only for himself but for all the sailors. "We know the hero of this story," says the editor of the *Catholic Magazine*, "and we can vouch for the truth of the fact, which it is sweet to relate for the glory of Our Lady of Mount Carmel."—*Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. CXXI., p. 3.

528. *The Shepherd Struck by Lightning.*—Large volumes might be written, my dear friends, and have already been written, to relate all the miracles of protection that are due to the scapular. Here is one that took place in 1855, if my memory does not deceive me. It was related in a journal of Aosta, in Piedmont. A shepherd having gone to graze his flock on the hill that separates the village of Chanforcier from that of Issogne, a furious storm came on. The shepherd took refuge with his flock under an overarching rock. He had only been a few moments there when the thunder crashed overhead and lightning struck the rock. Ten goats were killed, one of them quite close to the shepherd; as for him, he had only his clothes a little damaged. When asked how it happened that the lightning did not touch him, he re-

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plied: "If I was not struck dead, I owe it to the protection of the Blessed Virgin, whom I invoked, hardly knowing what I said; moreover, I had my scapular on, so I had nothing to fear." Accordingly he went early next day to the church, prostrated himself at the feet of the altar of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary, and thanked her for having preserved his life in such a miraculous manner.—*Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. CXXI., p. 5.

II.—ON THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL.

529. *A Rare Soldier.*—Listen, dear friends, to one of the miracles of the *miraculous medal.* On the 14th of April, 1833, there arrived at the hospital in Alencon, in the department of the Orne, a sick soldier, who came from the hospital of Vitré, in Ile et-Vilaine. He soon showed what he was: impious, irreligious, and rough even to brutality. The chaplain hastened to go and see him, compassionating his state of suffering; the opening of the jubilee was even a very natural occasion for him to speak some words to him on that extraordinary grace, and to exhort him gently to imitate the example of the other soldiers who were beginning to prepare for it. But this unhappy man answered him only by abuse. The chaplain did not insist, and contented himself, for some days, with kind inquiries after his health; the sick man hardly answered him, and appeared much annoyed by his visits and his words. The Sisters of Charity, who

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had the care of the hospital, were no better received, notwithstanding all the kind attention they bestowed on him. His malady became more serious, and seeing that the consolations of religion became more necessary to him, the chaplain again urged him to have recourse to the good God, but he answered him only with blasphemies: "Ah! yes, your good God, he is making fine game of me!" And the chaplain putting in some charitable words on the bad things he was saying, he added: "He does not like the French, your good God; you say that He is good and that He loves me; if He loved me would He make me suffer like this? how have I deserved it?" This impiety excited more and more the charitable zeal of the minister of a God who died to redeem sinners, and he spoke to him in forcible terms of the mercy and justice of the Lord. The sick man soon interrupted him with fresh insults: "You tire me to death, let me alone, I don't want you or your sermons." And he turned away so as not to see him. In the same way he acted towards the Sisters, and he knew only enough to utter the most horrible blasphemies against religion, and all those persons who reminded him of it. For some days no one spoke to him of religion, but every one redoubled their care and attention, leaving nothing undone that could give him pleasure. There was scarcely any hope left that he would return to God, for his disease was becoming more virulent, and so, too, were his sentiments; all that could then be done was to pray, and have him prayed for. The Sister of that ward,

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who had great confidence in the medal of the Blessed Virgin, felt herself inspired to fasten one to the foot of his bed, and did so. Meanwhile the patient continued in his bad dispositions, and was even indignant with some soldiers whom he saw preparing for confession to gain the jubilee indulgence. The medal had been six days fastened to the foot of his bed, and prayers were redoubled for this unhappy man, of whom they began to despair. One day, all the convalescents being at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the Sister approaches the patient's bed, takes off the medal, and presents it to him, saying: "Look at this medal, my friend, it is miraculous; I hung it at your bed some days since, and I have placed you under the protection of the Blessed Virgin." He did not raise his eyes, but grace was already working within him, for he did not get angry, as he usually did when any one spoke to him of religion. The Sister availed herself of this calm to speak to him of the Lord's mercies, and exhorted him again to look at the medal which she had fastened at the foot of the bed inside. After several entreaties he opened his eyes and looked at it: "I don't see your medal," said he; "it is a candle you have lit there,—yes, it is a light."—"You are mistaken, my friend," said the Sister; "look well!"—"I am looking, and I see it well enough; it is certainly a candle." Astonished and surprised, but fearing that the patient's sight might be failing, the good Sister showed him other objects much farther off, which he distinguished perfectly,

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whilst continuing to see that light for more than a quarter of an hour. Then the Sister spoke to him of the good God. Suddenly he felt himself penetrated with fear and love: "I will not die in the state in which I am!" he cried; "ask the chaplain if he will come and hear my confession!" At that moment, one of the other patients having blasphemed aloud: "Oh! make that unhappy man stop cursing," said he to the Sister; "I beg of you make him stop." From that moment he was no more the same man. Inasmuch as he had hitherto been cranky, brutal, and scandalous, he now became gentle, patient, mild, edifying in his words and all. He earnestly desired and asked for the last sacraments; he was prepared for them, and received them with a most lively faith. He suffered terribly, and yet was never seen to manifest for a single moment any impatience or ill humor. So he continued, constantly giving the most unequivocal proofs of a true conversion; happiness and peace were imprinted on his brow. The miraculous medal, which had been hung around his neck, had worked yet another miracle. This soldier died on the 26th of June, 1833.—*Account of the Miraculous Medal*, 68.

530. *I Forbid You to Send for a Priest.*—In the city of Strasburg, one of the first in France, there lived a man who affected that unbelief unhappily too common now-a-days in certain classes of society. It is unnecessary to say, therefore, that he did not practise religion. After a long career, during which he had shown only some very natural virtues, he fell

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ill; it was in the month of June, 1835; he was soon reduced to the last extremity. At this cruel juncture, his family became exceedingly anxious. They were told of the imminent danger, of the necessity of calling in a confessor; but that was not so easily done, dear friends, and for this reason: A long time before, this unhappy man had said to a female friend of the family: "It is more than probable that you will be in my house at the time of my last illness; well! I forbid you to send for a priest; mind, I absolutely forbid it!" This unhappy remembrance disturbed even the most zealous of his relations, so that no one dared to put the important question. Yet it so happened that some one had been lately reading the *Account of the Miraculous Medal*, and had seen therein hundreds of facts of this kind; he felt himself full of confidence, and proposed to place one about the sick man whilst he slept. This happy thought was warmly welcomed by all and immediately acted upon. Mary's triumph was not long delayed, and one cannot think of it without a lively feeling of gratitude; in one moment, even, our unbeliever was entirely changed. They call in a worthy clergyman, and he receives him with unusual emotion; he makes a general confession, gives every mark of the most sincere repentance, and having received the sacraments of the Church, he dies in the best dispositions. There is what may be called a prodigy, dear friends! May it increase, or, at least, strengthen our confidence in the Blessed Virgin!—*Account of the Miraculous Medal*, 285.

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531. *A Leper Cured by the Blessed Virgin.*—It is not only the soul, dear friends, that the Blessed Virgin is pleased to cure; she also relieves the body. Madlle. Adeline Gervais, of La Roche-Châlais, in the department of the Gironde, scarce twenty-two years of age, was afflicted some twenty months before with a fearful leprosy, which had already eaten away portions of her face and arms. Treated in vain by all the physicians of the city and its vicinity, and without experiencing any relief, she had been given up by them all. In this state she went to Libourne, to one of her sisters, who was settled there, hoping that the change of climate might be of some service to her. She had already passed two months there without finding herself any better. Her horrible state obliged her to remain shut up in a room without seeing any one or receiving any consolation. Meanwhile her mother, hearing of her sad and lonely condition, undertook the journey alone to go and see her. It was about the middle of November. She found this poor young lady in the same state in which she had so long seen her, suffering, moreover, from an ardent and continual fever. Her motherly heart was torn with anguish, and in her desolation she sought some relief for her trouble, when a person asked her to go see Sister Elizabeth, a Daughter of Charity, who dwelt in the hospital, assuring her that she would give her a remedy to cure her daughter. On the 19th of November, 1836, she accordingly took her dear child there. Although accustomed to see and treat all

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sorts of diseases, Sister Elizabeth owns that she was shocked on seeing this young person, the very sight of whom excited pity. *Yes, I will cure you*, she immediately said; and she gave her a medal, charging her to say every day the *Memorare*, or prayer of St. Bernard, and to add thereto the invocation which you know so well, my good little friends: *O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.* From the first day that she wore the medal, the leprosy began to dry up and fall away, till the eighth day, when it was perfectly cured. She remained three months longer at her sister's to see if the disease would return, but nothing appeared. Then she returned home. All the people of the neighborhood were struck with wonder on seeing her, but none were more surprised than the doctors, who could scarce believe their eyes. Madlle. Adeline, fully convinced that she owed her cure to the Blessed Virgin, delighted to wear always the precious medal, whereby she had been cured.—*Account of the Miraculous Medal*, 74.

532. *A Brother Cured by the Miraculous Medal.*—People often go afar off, my friends, to seek examples which prove the power and goodness of the Blessed Virgin; here is one that happened to one of our Brothers in 1837. This good religious had been long suffering from a bad foot which no remedy could cure, and it grew worse from day to day, nothing being able to arrest its progress. At length, the surgeon judged that amputation had become indispensable,

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Justly frightened at the prospect of this operation, the patient had recourse to prayer, but felt none the more relief in his sad state. One night, when he was suffering more than usual, he thought of having recourse to the *miraculous medal*, which he wore around his neck. He immediately took it, slipped it between the bandages that wrapped his foot, so as to make it touch the diseased part, and said at the same time the little prayer: *O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.* Immediately he felt the pain subside, so that he fell into a deep sleep, in which he continued till five o'clock in the morning. On awaking, he was surprised to find himself free from pain. He touches his foot, moves it, stretches it out, and all without suffering; the disease has totally disappeared. He immediately runs himself to apprise the Brother Director and the whole community, requesting them to unite with him in returning thanks for a favor so precious to him, and so glorious to the Blessed Virgin, who had obtained it for him. Our Superior General himself attested this fact, which was known to all our Communities in Paris.—*Account of the Miraculous Medal*, 363.

533. *General Canrobert's Medal.*—Amongst the edifying examples I have read concerning the medal of the Immaculate Conception, justly called the *miraculous medal*, there are few, my friends, that have struck me so much as this: General Canrobert, since Marshal of France, having come to take leave of the Empress before setting out for the Crimean war,

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her Majesty gave him a gold medal, attached to a silk cord, saying: "General, wear this medal with faith, and I am sure it will protect you." The brave General thanked the Empress, took the medal, and went away. Some months after, the following was seen in all the papers: "General Canrobert was struck by a piece of a shell; happily the projectile did him no harm, for it was stopped by the plate of a blessed medal." What some journals philosophically called *a plate*, children, the *Messager de la Charité* remarks was the medal of the Empress. This was established in the most authentic manner by a letter which Canrobert himself addressed to the Empress, to thank her whilst relating this fact, so evidently miraculous.—*Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. LXXXV., 6.

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CHAPTER VI.

ON THE SACRAMENTS.

534. *Institution of the Seven Sacraments.*—You are not unaware, my young friends, that it was Our Lord who instituted the seven sacraments; but what you, perhaps, do not know so well, are the passages of Holy Scripture which point out that institution. Well! Grotius is about to make them known to you, and Grotius is a learned Protestant doctor, born in Holland, and who lived in the XVIth century. "Baptism," says he, "is mentioned in St. Matthew (chap. XXVIII., v. 19): *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*—Confirmation appears in the Acts of the Apostles (ch. VIII., v. 17): *Then they laid their hands upon them; and they received the Holy Ghost.*—The Eucharist is mentioned in many places, especially in St. Matthew (ch. XXVI., v. 26, 27 and 28): And whilst they were at supper *Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to His disciples; and said: Take ye and eat, this is My body. And taking the chalice, He gave thanks; and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this.*—Penance is likewise found in St. Matthew (ch. XVI., v. 19): *And I*

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will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.—Extreme Unction appears in those words of St. Mark (ch. VI., v. 13): And they anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.—Order is mentioned implicitly in a great number of passages, but it is so in a positive manner in the First Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy (ch. V., v. 22): *Impose not hands lightly upon any man;* and in the second (ch. I., v. 6): *Wherefore it is that I exhort you* to stir up *the grace of God, which you received when I imposed hands upon you.*—Finally, Matrimony, instituted at the beginning of the world, was raised by Our Lord to the dignity of a Sacrament; hence St. Paul plainly says, in the Epistle to the Ephesians (ch. V., v. 32): *It is a great Sacrament.*"

Such are, my friends, some of the most formal passages of the New Testament, touching the institution of our sacraments, and it is certainly very curious that they are collected by a Protestant, as I have just now told you.—G. S. G.

535. *The Wants of Man in Society.*—I know not, dear friends, whether you have sometimes made the following reflection: that the seven sacraments answer to all our spiritual wants, which are generally analagous to our corporal wants. Thus, for the natural life, seven things are necessary to man. 1st, that he come into the world; 2d, that he grow

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and strengthen; 3d, that he take wholesome and regular food, to repair his strength and preserve and develope life within him; 4th, that he employ remedies to cure himself, if he grow ill; 5th, that he subject himself to a strict regimen to try to recover his health when he is enfeebled by age and infirmities; 6th, that there be magistrates to protect and defend him, and even at need to punish him, if he should become hurtful to himself or others; 7th, that he leave after him a family, more or less numerous, for the preservation of mankind. Well! dear friends, it is just the same with the divine and supernatural life, as you are going to see by the special object of each sacrament. 1st, Baptism makes us born to the life of grace, which is the proper life of our soul; 2d, Confirmation increases that life of the soul, making us perfect Christians; 3d, the Eucharist is a celestial nourishment, which preserves and developes the spiritual life within us; 4th, Penance is, as it were, a universal remedy, which restores health, and sometimes even life to our soul, when it has been wounded or killed by sin; 5th, Extreme Unction effaces all traces of spiritual diseases, and restores to the soul the strength it may have lost; 6th, Order gives spiritual magistrates, empowered to direct, defend, and if need be to punish us for our own good and that of others; 7th, Matrimony perpetuates the Church of God by giving her spiritual children. Do you perceive, dear friends, that this comparison is calculated to make us admire the wisdom of God, and His good-

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ness in our regard ?—GRIDEL, *Soirées Chretiennes*, VI., 125.

536. *Our Sacraments Appreciated by Protestants.*—I am happy, children, speaking of our seven sacraments, to be able to quote for you the opinion of a famous Protestant. I mean the celebrated Goethe, a poet and philosopher, and one of the mightiest geniuses of Germany in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Notwithstanding the strange errors into which he had the misfortune of falling, his superior intelligence knew how to render a solemn homage, the sincerity of which no one can suspect, to the sublime harmony which exists between the Catholic religion and the highest faculties of the soul, with its purest affections. "Protestant worship, considered as a whole," said he, "is too meagre, too empty. Examine it in detail, and you will find that the Protestant has not enough of sacraments; there is but one in which he participates actively and spontaneously, and that sacrament is the Supper; for, as for Baptism, he only sees it conferred on others, and he does not actually feel its salutary effects on himself. Yet the Sacraments are what is most sublime in religion; they are the visible symbol of an extraordinary grace and favor which God grants to men." After this preamble, Goethe gives a rapid and eloquent description of our seven sacraments; then he adds: "It is important that the source of salvation which springs for us in these sacraments should flow, not once only, but whilst we are on this earth. And these means, the

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efficacy of which we shall have experienced during our whole life, we shall feel at the gates of death, ten times more still their inestimable benefits. Following a custom which has taken root in his earliest years and which is become dear to him, the Christian, whose life is fading away, embraces with fervor the visible symbols of the truths which promise him a new life: earth has nothing more to offer him, its promises are dumb; but he receives from Heaven the pledges of an eternal felicity." I regret, children, that this passage from the German writer is somewhat long; but I have quoted enough of it to make you feel both the happiness of the Catholic, who has all the sacraments at his disposal, and the sad condition of our erring brethren, who vegetate in the grievous and voluntary privation of the first helps.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez.*, V., 179.

537. *The Marvellous Fountain.*—I have read, my very dear friends, in the *Explanation of the Nancy Catechism*, a somewhat ingenious comparison on the Sacraments, which are, as it were, so many canals through which we may receive the waters of grace. In the midst of a vast plain, ever green and flowery, there was a beautiful and magnificent fountain. It shed its limpid and abundant waters over the fields by means of seven little channels that were ever full. It is true that its waters sometimes appeared a little bitter, but they had a wonderful virtue. In fact, according as one drank from one stream or another, they received its salutary effects; here, old men

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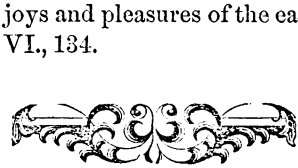
became young and vigorous; there, the ugly, those who had any deformity, any natural defect, appeared handsome, straight, well formed; all the sick returned thence healed and strengthened. Even the bodies of the dead were there restored to life when plunged in, with certain precautions. But better still than that, my friends: at this marvellous fountain the poor became rich; the wretched found happiness; sorrowful people drank gaiety and joy. Beside this fountain there is another, whose waters also flow in great abundance; it appears, at first, to be as sweet as honey; but scarcely is it in the stomach when it produces cholic, vomiting, nervous convulsions, and often even death. Well! would you believe it, dear friends, that, notwithstanding the daily experience of the different effects of these two fountains, although many persons, undoubtedly, come to draw water from the first, a very great number fear not to drink of the second. It is a folly, you will tell me. Doubtless it is, and a great folly. Try, my good friends, never to be of the number of those who are attacked by it. You understand that the first spring of which I have spoken to you is the Sacraments, whilst the second is the deceitful joys and pleasures of the earth.—GRIDEL, *Soir. Chret.*, VI., 134.



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CHAPTER VII.

BAPTISM.

538. *An Officer Baptized in a Fountain.*—Before a grown person is baptized, my friends, it must first be ascertained that they are sufficiently instructed in religion. Of this we have a proof and an example in the Acts of the Apostles. One day the deacon, St. Philip, was quietly reposing in his house, when God spoke to him and said: "Arise quickly and go towards the south, to the desert way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza." St. Philip arose and set out. Soon he perceives a fine chariot, in which was a black-a-moor, who was one of the principal officers of Candace, queen of Ethiopia. He was returning from adoring God in Jerusalem, and reading the book of the prophet Isaiah. Philip accosts him as he sits in his chariot, and asks him if he understands what he reads. "How can I," said he, "unless some one show me?" He had happened on the passage where Isaiah says, speaking of Our Lord: "As a sheep He was led to the slaughter: and like a lamb without a voice before a shearer, so opened He not His mouth." The holy deacon took occasion, then, to speak to him

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of Jesus Christ, made him observe that those prophecies related to His Passion, and finally gave him a brief explanation of all our holy religion. The chariot was still going on; they soon came to a fountain; the officer asked what hindered him from being baptized, and St. Philip, finding him sufficiently instructed to receive baptism, willingly conferred it upon him. The officer went out of the water regenerated by the new sacrament he had received, and went his way rejoicing.—*Acts of the Apostles*, Ch. VIII.

539. *An Actor Baptized on the Stage.*—One of the most extraordinary baptisms I ever heard of is, unquestionably, the one of which I am going to speak to you. Public rejoicings were going on in Rome, and the Emperor Dioclesian was present with all his court. An actor, named Genes, thought he could no better divert those idolators than by counterfeiting, in derision, the ceremonies of baptism. He appeared on the stage lying in a bed, as though he were sick, and asked to be baptized, so that he might die easy. Two other actors then came forward, one dressed as a priest, the other as an exorcist. They approached the bed and said to Genes, with mock gravity: "My child, wherefore didst thou send for us?" The very moment they pronounced these words, the heart of Genes was changed by the grace of God, and he answered very seriously: "Because I wish to receive the grace of God, and, by holy regeneration, obtain the remission of my sins." This only made people

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think that he played his part all the better. The ceremonies of the Sacrament were then gone through on the very stage, just as Christians performed them at that period, that is to say, in 306. When the white robe, the mark of the newly-baptized, was put on Genes, soldiers took him, continuing the farce, and presented him to the Emperor, to be interrogated like the martyrs. Genes availed himself of the natural facility he had in speaking, and with an inspired tone and air, he delivered this discourse from the high place where he was: "Hear me, O Emperor, and ye all, courtiers, senators, plebeians, and members of all the orders of superb Rome, hear me. Formerly, when I so much as heard the name of Jesus Christ uttered I trembled with rage and outraged, in every way I could, those who professed that belief. I even hated several of my neighbors and connections, because they were Christians, and I detested that religion so much that I made myself intimately acquainted with all its mysteries, as you may have observed, in order to make of them a public farce. But, at the moment when the water of baptism touched my flesh, my heart was changed, and to the questions put to me, I answered sincerely as I believed. I saw a hand stretched out from heaven, and shining angels hovering over me. They read in a terrible book all the sins I had committed from my childhood; they effaced them all immediately after, then showed me the book whiter than snow. You, then, great Emperor, and you, spectators of all conditions, whom

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these sacrilegious games have made laugh at our divine mysteries, believe with me, who am more guilty than you, that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and that He is worthy of our adoration, and try, also, to obtain His mercy." The Emperor Dioclesian, equally surprised and irritated, first had Genes beaten with rods, then he handed him over to the prefect Plautian, in order to compel him to sacrifice to the idols. The prefect employed every torment, but in vain. Genes constantly answered: "There is no master like Him who appeared to me; I adore and love Him with my whole soul; though I had a thousand lives to lose, nothing should separate me from Him. Never, no, never, shall torments take Jesus from my mouth and heart; I feel the deepest sorrow for all my past errors, and for having commenced so late to serve Him." It was seen that his eloquence was making an impression, and they hastened to cut off his head. He thus went, like the newly-baptized, who have received pardon for all their sins, he thus went, I say, to receive in heaven the crown due to his generous martyrdom.—GODESCARD, *Vie des Saints*, 26th August.

540. *The Forty Martyrs of Sebasti.*—Ecclesiastical history furnishes several examples of martyrs who were baptized in their blood. One of the most celebrated is that which I am going to tell you, my dear children!—In 320, under the Emperor Licinius, a Roman legion, named *the Thundering*, had its winter quarters at Sebasti, in Armenia. Most of the soldiers were pagans like the Emperor; nevertheless,

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forty of them had the honor of being baptized. They courageously refused to offer incense to the idols, and were brought before Agricola, governor of the city, who condemned them to be exposed a whole night on a frozen pond. In order to tempt them still more, he took the cruel precaution of having a hot bath ready close at hand, and he told these forty heroes that those who were willing to offer sacrifice would have only to plunge into the hot bath. But they all promised to persevere even to the end; they said to God: "Lord, Thou hast called forty of us to the combat, let forty obtain the victory." Nevertheless, towards midnight, one of them, unable longer to bear the rigor of the cold, apostatized and went and threw himself into the hot bath; the wretch found his death there after a few minutes. About an hour after, the sentinel on duty suddenly saw a brilliant light; and it seemed to descend from heaven and place a crown on the head of each valiant soldier of Christ. But as there were forty-crowns, and only thirty-nine martyrs, there remained one without an owner. Then the sentry immediately quits his box, leaving his arms behind, strips himself of his furred coats, and goes to place himself on the ice beside the others, crying as loud as he could, "*I, too, am a Christian!*" I need not tell you, my good friends, that the fortieth crown was for him. Thus he was baptized in his own blood.—Godescard, *Vies des Saints*, 10th March.

541. *A Child Resuscitated to be Baptized.*—Baptism

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is so necessary for salvation, dear friends, that even children cannot enter heaven if they have not been regenerated by this sacrament. It has even happened that some of these poor little children, having died without being baptized, were miraculously restored to life. St Augustine himself relates an interesting instance of this kind, which I am going to tell you. At Uzale a woman had an infant son; she so ardently desired to make him a good Christian, that she had him already inscribed on the roll of the catechumens. Unfortunately he died before they had time to baptize him; his mother was overwhelmed with grief, still more for his being deprived of life eternal, than because he was dead to her. Full of confidence, nevertheless, she takes the dead child, and publicly carries it to the Church of St. Stephen, the first martyr. There she commences praying for the son she had just lost, and she prayed in these terms: "Holy martyr, thou seest that I am left without any consolation, for I cannot say that my son is gone before me, since thou knowest he is lost, and that is why I weep; give me back my son, so that I may see him in heaven in the presence of Him who crowned thee!" Whilst praying in this way, and shedding bitter tears, her son moved, uttered a cry, and was suddenly restored to life. And because his mother had said, Thou knowest why I ask him back, God was pleased to show that she spoke sincerely. She immediately brought him to the priests, he was baptized, sanctified, anointed, hands were imposed upon him, and

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after thus receiving the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, he died anew. The pious mother, happy in having seen him regenerated in the waters of baptism, took care not to lament his death; on the contrary, she followed him to the grave with a gay and smiling air, because she knew very well that he was not going into a cold sepulchre, but to dwell with the angels in heaven.—St. Augustine, *Sermon* 324.

542. *Can One be Baptized with Sand?*—You all know, my friends, that baptism cannot be administered except with natural water, even in case of urgent need. Here is a curious story on that subject, which happened at the end of the sixth century, or in the first years of the seventh. It is related by a celebrated priest and solitary of Egypt, named John Moschi, who was himself told it by the Abbot Octavius, an eye-witness. "In my childhood," said that abbot, "I lived at Alexandria; I was very giddy and thoughtless. One day, having been severely chastised for a serious fault I had committed, I fled from my father's house with nine others, as silly as myself, with the exception of one, who had much good sense and religion. We took the way to Jerusalem. When we were in the desert of Arabia, one of us, who was a little Jew, fell suddenly sick unto death, which gave us a great deal of concern, as we knew not what to do with him. We did not abandon him, however, but, assisting him with the charity common to those who travel in company, we carried him, in turn, the best way we could, so as to take him, if possible, to some

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inhabited place, and not let him die in the desert. But the want of nourishment, the violence of the fever, excess of fatigue and thirst, having reduced him to such an extremity that he could no longer bear to be carried, we resolved, although with much grief and many tears, to leave him, lest we, too, should die in the desert of hunger and thirst. We laid him on the sand and left him; but when he saw us going away, he besought us by all that is most holy not to let him die a Jew, but to have the charity to baptize him, so that, being a Christian, he might go to enjoy the presence of God on departing this life. As we had no water and knew not what to resolve on, the one whom I mentioned as the most sensible of us all, being doubtless inspired by God, filled his two hands with sand, which he poured three times on the Jew's head, saying the sacramental words: *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* As for us, we all answered *Amen* when he named each person of the Most Holy Trinity. I take God to witness that this ceremony was no sooner ended than Jesus Christ Our Lord cured the child so perfectly that there remained not in him the least trace of his malady, nor any weakness whatever; he was even in such good health that he made with the greatest ease all the rest of the journey through the desert. When we arrived at Ascalon we took the Jew, now a Christian, to the blessed Bishop Denis, and told him all that had happened. He assembled his clergy, in order to consult whether that baptism,

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given with sand instead of water, might pass for a true baptism. Some said yes, since the action was followed by a great miracle; others maintained the contrary, on the authority of St. Gregory of Nazianzen and Our Lord himself, who says that *unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he shall not enter the kingdom of God.* These reasons and a number of others having been advanced on both sides, the holy Bishop Denis ordered the child to be baptized anew in the sacred waters of the Jordan; but to reward the piety and zeal of the youth who had baptized him with sand, in the extreme desire the child had of becoming a Christian, he conferred upon him the dignity of deacon.—JOHN MOSCH, *Pré Spirituel*, Ch. 50.

543. *My Father's Name and Likeness.*—By baptism we become children of God; and children ought to imitate their father, and beware of doing anything that might displease him or dishonor his name. When you come to read the history of Poland, my very dear friends, you will there find something that may serve you as a lesson in this respect. Boleslaus IV., king of that country, ascended the throne in 1146, and reigned thirteen years. He so loved his father, who was also called Boleslaus, that he had a fine miniature taken of him, got it framed in gold, hung it round his neck like a medal, and all the day he kept looking at it and kissing it with the greatest fondness. When he meant to undertake anything of importance, if he were about

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to go on a journey, to dictate a law, to pronounce a sentence, he took that precious portrait, glued his lips to it with love and fervor, and said from the depth of his heart: "O my father! pray to God that I may never dishonor thy name; let me not say or do anything unworthy of thee!" Let us imitate this example, my friends! we bear within us the image of God, Our Father, let us never do anything that would displease Him.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 82.

544. *The Body of a Child Found in the Filth of the Street*.—I have already told you, dear friends, that baptism is so necessary for the salvation, even of little children, that God has sometimes wrought miracles on that account, to reward the faith of His servants. A sight well worthy of public attention was witnessed by the whole parish of St. Martin-des-Champs, in Paris. It was that of a miracle which took place, in 1393, by the powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, and that prodigy is stamped with all the characters of truth. An unfortunate woman, having forgotten the laws of religion and honor, from one crime precipitated herself into another; she even came at last to stifle the cries of nature. To save her reputation, and get rid of a little girl whom she had brought into the world, she had the horrible barbarity to take the life of the unhappy child, by thrusting a piece of linen into its mouth, so that it could not breathe, and was smothered. Then she had it secretly carried out of the city and buried in a heap of manure, near the door of St.

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Martin-des-Champs Providence arranged it so that a huntsman passed that way some time after; one of his dogs stopped at the place, began to smell round the heap of dirt, scattered it with his paws, and exposed the child to view. People ran from all parts, and as there was no proof that baptism had been administered, it was thought that the body ought not to be buried in consecrated ground. Whilst the people were consulting about it, a woman, touched with compassion, cried out that it was a great pity an innocent creature should be deprived of the sight of God by the fault of its parents; and, instantly, taking the little body in her arms, she proposed to carry it to the church, and ask the Blessed Virgin to intercede for it. It was a second prodigy, remarks the historian of the time of Charles VI., that of more than four hundred persons who heard what the woman said, not one opposed it, and that, on the contrary, all of them followed to the Church of St. Martin-des-Champs. When they reached the church the pious woman laid the child before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and the religious and all present were asked to pray for it. At the end of some moments the protection of Mary was publicly manifested: the dead infant gave signs of life; she made an effort to throw out the cloth that had stifled her, and succeeded; then gave a loud cry. This was the signal for universal acclamation; all the bells were rung, the *Te Deum* was sung, and as the crowd was so dense that not a step could be made

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in the church towards the baptismal font, the child was baptized at the foot of the altar, and received the name of Mary. It lived three hours after, in the sight of every one; a nurse was even brought, who suckled it several times. This child of benediction then died, and, on the morrow, it was buried in the church, under the very altar at which it was baptized.—Debussi, *Nouveau Mois de Marie*, 132.

545. *How One Ought to Live After Baptism.*—When one has had the happiness of being baptized, like you and me, my very dear friends, they should, by right, never more offend the good God. There were Saints, nay, even poor savages, who did so. Listen: A pious missionary, whose name I have forgotten, was traversing the wildest regions of North America to win souls for Christ; he stopped at the principal villages, and often found there savages whom grace brought to him from a considerable distance. He instructed them, baptized those whom he thought well disposed, and then went on his way to other places. A savage one day presented himself to him whose fervor appeared to have something extraordinary; so soon as he was well instructed in the mysteries of our holy religion and what relates to the sacraments, the missionary administered baptism to him, and also gave him the divine Eucharist, which this good Indian received with the most lively transports of love and gratitude. The missionary then went off on other apostolic excursions. A year after he returned to the place where dwelt this Indian con-

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vert. As soon as the latter was aware of the missionary's arrival, he ran to throw himself at his feet, and bathed them with his tears; he knew not how to express the joy he felt in seeing again him who had begotten him to Jesus Christ. He soon entreats the Father to grant him once more the happiness he had made him enjoy the year before. "Of what happiness do you speak?" asks the missionary. "Ah! my father, do you not know? the happiness of receiving within me the body of my God!"—"Willingly, my child, but first you must go to confession. Have you examined your conscience well?"—"Father, I examined it every day, as you charged me to do last year."—"In that case, kneel down, and declare to me the faults into which you may have fallen since your baptism."—"What faults, Father?"—"Why, the grave faults you feel having wilfully committed against the commandments of God and the Church."—"*Grave faults!*" answers the savage all amazed; "can any one offend God after they are baptized, and especially after having received communion? Is there anywhere Christians capable of such ingratitude?" Saying these words he burst into tears, and the missionary, on his side, wept too, blessing God for having prepared for himself even in the forests of America such worshippers, who may, indeed, be called worshippers in spirit and in truth. What a lesson for us, dear friends! —Let us try to profit by it.—DEBUSSI, *Nouv. Mois de Marie*, 135.

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546. *A Child Dying with the Desire of Baptism.*—You have not forgotten, dear friends, that baptism may be supplied in divers ways for those who have come to the use of reason. They may, for example, be saved by the baptism of desire. Here is a very interesting instance of that which I read in the *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith.* It is M. Odin, missionary apostolic,* who himself relates it. "At some distance from our establishment at Barrens, in Missouri (United States of America), there was a district inhabited by Protestants or infidels, with the exception of three or four Catholic families. In 1834 we had the consolation of baptizing several persons there; thus it was that the Lord was pleased to reward the kindness with which one of the most respectable inhabitants gave us hospitality every time we journeyed that way. This worthy man, who was not a Catholic, had three little children, who received with eagerness the instructions we never failed to give them. The tallest of the sons, only eight years old, especially showed such a particular relish for the word of God that he learned by heart the entire catechism. Evening and morning he addressed his little prayer to the good God, and if ever his little sister missed that holy exercise, he reproached her very seriously. Things were at this point when the cholera broke out in the neighborhood; then this good little boy said simply to his mother: 'Mamma, the cholera is coming here; oh! how glad I should

* Subsequently Archbishop of New Orleans.

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be if the priests from the seminary came to baptize me. That cruel disease will attack me, I am sure it will, and I shall die without baptism; then you will be sorry.' Alas! the poor child predicted truly: he was one of the first victims of the dreadful plague. During the short moments of his cruel sufferings he incessantly asked for baptism, and even with his last sigh he kept repeating: 'Oh! if any one would baptize me! My God! must I die without being baptized?' The mother, thinking that she could not herself administer that sacrament, although there was evident necessity, was in the greatest trouble; neither would the child consent to receive it from the hands of a Protestant minister. At last he died without having obtained his ardent wish. As soon as I heard of the cholera being in that part of the country I hastened thither; but I only reached there some hours after the child's funeral. The family was plunged in the greatest affliction. I consoled them all I could, and especially in relation to the eternal destiny of their poor little one, by explaining to them what the Church teaches us on the baptism of desire. This consoling doctrine much assuaged their grief; after giving the other necessary instructions, I baptized the mother and the two young children, and so did [illegible] after the father failed not to follow the example of his family." There is a story, my friends, that will fully enable us to understand what is meant by the baptism of desire, and will also make you thank God for the happiness he gave you of receiving

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that sacrament in your earliest infancy.—*Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, IV.

547. *The Renewal of the Baptismal Vows.*—An imposing ceremony is that of the renewal of the baptismal vows; but, very dear children, I doubt whether you have ever seen one so solemn as that which I am going to describe for you. In 1845, in the very middle of the sound between the islands of Java and Sumatra, in the Indian Ocean, the ship *l'Orient* presented a spectacle well worthy to fix the eyes of Heaven. After the exercises of the Month of Mary had been gone through with the most touching piety, there was a general communion, in which all took part, from the captain to the smallest cabin-boy. In the evening vespers were sung by two choirs; then took place the renewal of the baptismal vows, which was preceded and followed by a little instruction. You cannot think what impression that ceremony, which was certainly to no one a mere formality, made on those brave fellows. After the missionaries had themselves renewed the promises of their baptism, to give the example, the captain advanced to the foot of the altar, at the head of his men, and pronounced the usual formula in a firm and energetic tone, the more striking because it contrasted strangely with the tears that stood in his eyes. You should have seen and heard him, with all the others, standing, with his right hand on the book of the Gospels, pronouncing slowly and in a tremulous voice these words: I RENOUNCE SATAN, HIS POMPS, HIS WORKS,

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AND I ATTACH MYSELF TO JESUS CHRIST ALONE. This was all that had been put in the formula, but the captain added, FOR EVER, and most of the others repeated after him that eternal oath. Then came the consecration to the good Virgin of sailors, who was never forgotten in their pious conversations. It was followed by a little hymn, the last verse of which is as follows:

Vois cette foule recueillie,
Qui t' appartient, qui te supplie;
Ce sont tes enfants à genoux,
Marie;
Jette ton regard le plus doux
Sur tous.*

Behold this crowd assembled,
To thee belonging, thee entreating;
Thy kneeling children are they all,
Oh! Mary, cast thy sweetest look
Upon them!

At these words all fell on their knees, as if instinctively. Finally, the *Te Deum* was sung, in a full chorus, in which every one joined, with an expression of happiness that surpasses all description. If Châteaubriand, the sublime author of the *Genius of Christianity*, had been there, he, at least, might have done justice to that scene.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, VI., 248.

* Which may be thus translated:

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CHAPTER VIII.

CONFIRMATION.

548. *A True Soldier of Christ.*—By Confirmation, dear children, you know we become perfect Christians, and it imprints in us the indelible character of soldiers of Christ. Would you have an example of it? In the city of Cesarea, in Palestine, a soldier named Marinus was serving in the army of the Emperor Gallian; it was about the year 264. He was entitled to the rank of centurion, or captain of a hundred men, which was vacant at the time; he was even on the point of obtaining it when another presented himself at the tribunal and declared that, according to the laws, Marinus had no right to that position, because he was a Christian, and did not sacrifice to the emperor. "It is to me," he added, "that the place belongs of right, because I am the first in point of seniority." The governor, named Achea, asked Marinus what he thought of it, and the latter confessed publicly and constantly that he was a Christian. The judge gave him three hours' time to reflect on what he was to do. As he left the tribunal the Bishop Theotecue accosted him, took him by the hand and led him to the church. He brought him into the very sanctuary, and raising his large military

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cloak, took the sword he wore at his side, and at the same time presented him with the book of the holy Gospels, saying: "Choose which you will, either an officer's sword or the book of the Gospels." Without hesitating, Marinus stretched out his right hand and took the sacred book. "Attach thyself, then, to God," said Theoteene; "He will strengthen thee, and obtain for thee that which thou hast chosen; go in peace!" As he left the church he was called by the public crier to appear before the judge. He presented himself at the tribunal, and, having given testimony to his faith still more boldly, he was immediately dragged to execution just as he was. Some moments after his head rolled on the ground, but his soul went straight to heaven; he proved that he was what may be called a valiant soldier of Christ.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 55.

549. *One Newly Confirmed Who Triumphs Over the Devil.*—When we have the happiness, my friends, of being truly Christian, we are more powerful than the devil himself. The Emperor Julian, styled the apostate, having resolved publicly to profess idolatry, had caused great preparations to be made for a sacrifice he was to offer in a temple dedicated to the demon. He repaired thither with much pomp attended by his whole court, to give to that impious action all the splendor possible. All being ready, the Emperor made a sign for them to commence. But what was the astonishment of the pagan priests, when they found themselves quite bewildered and unable,

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notwithstanding all their efforts, to proceed with that abominable ceremony? Their very knives, which they had taken care to sharpen well, would no longer enter the flesh of the victims; at last the fire they had kindled on the altar was suddenly extinguished. The chief sacrificer then exclaimed: "Surely there is here a great unknown power that opposes our designs." He then besought Julian to allow a search to be made to ascertain whether there was not, amongst the spectators, some Christian who had been lately washed with water or anointed with chrism; you understand, dear friends, that by these expressions he meant to designate the Sacrament of Baptism and that of Confirmation. There was, in fact, in the temple, a young page of the Emperor's who was a Christian, and who had received Confirmation but a few days before. The Emperor having said aloud: *Let this search be made!* the page hesitated not to present himself and say: "Know that I am a Christian; I have been baptized, and it is not long since I was anointed with the chrism of Confirmation to strengthen me in the combat. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, who redeemed me by the cross; I acknowledge Him as my God, and glory in belonging to Him. It is I, or rather it is the Lord whom I serve, that has prevented the act of impiety you were about to perform. I invoked in my heart the sacred name of Jesus Christ, and your demons had no longer any power. In the name of Jesus Christ, who is the true God, they have been put to flight." The Emperor Julian, who had been

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a Christian, and was well instructed in the power of Our Lord, was seized with terror. He dreaded the effects of His vengeance and left the temple, covered with confusion and without saying a single word. The courageous soldier of Christ also went away and related to the Christians what had just happened; they gave glory to God therefor, and recognized how formidable to the demon are those in whom dwelleth the power of the Holy Ghost, by the Sacrament of Confirmation.—LASSAUSSE, *Explic. du Cat. de l'Empire*, 478.

550. *Confirmation Given by St. Cuthbert.*—Cities which have no bishops, as well as thousands of villages scattered throughout the provinces, can but rarely enjoy the privilege of seeing the chief pastor of their diocese. But what joy there is, for that very reason, when he goes thither to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. I have read that St. Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne, in England, who lived in the seventh century, marked all his pastoral visits by miracles and benefits of every kind. He went through the smallest villages and did not disdain to enter even the poorest cabins. His principal care was to administer to the newly-baptized the Sacrament of Confirmation, in order that they might receive the grace of the Holy Spirit by the imposition of hands. One day, having entered, with that intention, the house of an earl, whose wife was dangerously ill, this nobleman went to meet him, threw himself on his knees, and thanked God for his arrival. Having brought him into his house, where he treated

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him very kindly, he began to speak to him of the desperate malady of his wife, earnestly entreating him to bless water wherewith to sprinkle her. "I believe," said he, "that by that means she will either be restored to health, or if she must die, she will pass from death to life everlasting." The man of God acceded to his prayer, and having blessed the water they brought him, he gave it to the priest who accompanied him, telling him to sprinkle some of it over the sick person. The priest executed the holy bishop's order; he sprinkled the sick woman with the holy water, and even poured some drops thereof into her mouth. Immediately she felt herself entirely cured; she blessed and thanked God for that miraculous favor, rose on the instant, and had the happiness of entertaining the holy bishop herself.—BEDE, *Life of St. Cuthbert*, Ch. XXIX.

551. *Two Possessed Persons Receiving Cofirmation.* —It is with the Sacrament of Confirmation as with all others, dear friends; it always does good to our soul when we receive it with holy dispositions; but it often exercises, too, a favorable influence on our body. I read a striking instance of this kind in the life of St. Bont, Bishop of Clermont, the chief town of the department of Puy-de-Dôme; that holy bishop lived in the seventh century. One day, going through the mountains of Auvergne, he saw at a distance two men coming towards him in a supplicating posture, who addressing him besought him to impose hands

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on them and give them the Sacrament of Confirmation. At that period of faith and piety, my good friends, it was not with indifference that a favorable opportunity of receiving Confirmation was expected; on the contrary, each one made it a duty to seek it with eagerness, and to prepare for it with much fervor. The two persons of whom I have spoken were in a state of grace, but they had the misfortune of being possessed by the devil, who tormented them from time to time in a horrible manner. St. Bout, who was ignorant of the fact, questioned them a little to sound their dispositions, betook himself to prayer, imposed hands upon them, and at length continued his way without any delay. Some minutes after, his attendants, having the curiosity to follow with their eyes the two newly-confirmed persons, were not a little surprised to see them throwing up a great quantity of blood; it was the devil delivering them of his presence, because he could no longer, of course, torment men who had just received the Holy Ghost with the plenitude of His graces.—D. MABILLON, *a Third Century Benedictine.*

552. *The Holy Chrism Multiplied Miraculously.*—None of you is ignorant that the matter of the sacrament of Confirmation is the holy chrism, composed of olive oil and balsam. There happened in the eighth century an astonishing miracle connected therewith; I am going to tell you how it was. St. Pirmin, founder of several monasteries, abbot and chorepiscopus in Germany, was applying himself as

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usual to the functions of preaching. A crowd of persons, even from different countries, attracted by the odor of his sanctity, came unceasingly to hear his exhortations, and earnestly requested to receive the salutary imposition of hands and the unction of Confirmation. But because the place was narrow and shut in between two rivers, he went to a more convenient place for the performance of this sacred rite. God made known by a celebrated miracle how much He favored it, for as that holy bishop was giving Confirmation to a great number of persons, it happened that there was not enough of the holy chrism to confirm all that presented themselves. St. Pirmin, seeing himself reduced to this extremity, said to one of his ministers: "Go quick, and bring the phials from the monastery, and fill them again, so that we may still make use of the holy unction." The minister, obeying the holy bishop's orders, took hold of the stocks; but scarcely had he looked at them, when he found them filled with miraculous oil. Seeing, then, such an evident miracle, the priest lost no time in going to manifest to the holy pontiff the singular favor which God had granted him. There was there a great assembly of people, who, struck with admiration at so great a miracle, could not sufficiently express their joy, or proclaim the praises of Jesus Christ. The holy prelate, having likewise returned thanks to God, went on confirming all that came; for the people came in greater crowds, and with more devotion, knowing that the holy chrism wherewith they were

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to be confirmed had, as it were, come down from heaven, and St. Pirmin was kept all day giving Confirmation. Night being come, the holy bishop gave the people his blessing, and each one returned home, full of celestial joy, blessing and praising God for so great a marvel.—D. MABILLON.

553. *Negligence of a Bishop in Administering Confirmation.*—Confirmation is a sacrament so precious, dear children, that we should hasten to receive it, and bishops always make it a duty to administer it. One day, a man, in deep affliction, went to St. Maurice, Bishop of Ghent, and earnestly besought him to come to his house, to confirm his child, who was very ill, and must soon die. It was the custom then to administer that sacrament even to children who had not yet the use of reason. The bishop acceded to his request, but his occupations not having permitted him to go immediately, the child died during that short interval. When the holy man learned the news, he was in such trouble that he bewailed, for several days, with copious and bitter tears, what he called his negligence. His grief at length reached such a point that he persuaded himself he was no longer worthy of being a bishop, and fled to England, where he took service as gardener in a prince's household, the better to conceal his former dignity. Long after, his friends succeeded in discovering the place of his retreat, and after much persuasion, prevailed upon him to return to Ghent. What a high esteem must not that holy bishop have

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had for the Sacrament of Confirmation, when he thought himself obliged to undergo so long a penance, for having been the involuntary cause of a child dying without receiving that sacrament! A great lesson for those who neglect to receive it, or to prepare for it.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 59.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE EUCHARIST.

I.—ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST.

554. *A Jewish Glass-Founder's Son.*—My dear friends, there happened in the time of St. Mennas, patriarch of Constantinople, in the sixth century, a miracle too plain and too well attested to be passed over in silence. It was the custom at Constantinople, when the holy Eucharist was being renewed, to have the particles of the sacred host that remained from the last consecration eaten by children still in a state of innocence. The Greek historian Nicephorus assures us that he was called on several times in his childhood, to communicate in this way. One day when the children were brought from the schools for that purpose, there was amongst them a little Jew, who received Communion with the others. His father, a glass-founder by profession, wanted to know why he came home so late that day from school. The child simply told him what had passed. The Jew having learned that he had received the Eucharist, was so enraged that he flung the poor child into the fiery furnace in which he melted glass. The mother, in her grief and terror for the disappearance of her child, made the house re-echo with her cries; at

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length, at the end of three days, passing near the furnace, lamenting aloud, she heard a voice gently calling her. Not knowing, at first, where the voice came from, she opens the furnace; she perceives her dear child quietly sitting in the midst of the flames, without appearing to suffer the least in the world from the fire. She draws him out immediately and asks him how it was that he was not burned up amongst those red coals. "Mamma, a lady all dressed in purple often appeared to me in those three days; she threw water about me, extinguishing the fire that might reach me, and she fed me all that time." The whole city soon heard of this amazing prodigy. The mother and her son immediately embraced the Catholic religion and had themselves baptized. As for the father, he obstinately refused to be converted; he was punished with death for this fearful attempt on the life of his child, and that by order of the Emperor Justinian himself. This happened at Constantinople, in the year 532 of our era.—Abbé FAVRE, *Le Ciel Ouvert*, 142.

555. *The Mystery of the Eucharist.*—You remember, children, that a mystery is a truth which we are bound to believe, although we can neither comprehend nor explain it. The Eucharist is of that number; we know well that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Our Lord, but we know not how that can be done. Here is something that may give us an idea of it. I have read that Samenes, Bishop of Gaza, in Palestine, travelling

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one day with a caravan, a Turk asked him how He could imagine that bread changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The holy bishop immediately answered: "That is not very difficult to God, for He can well effect by a miracle what He does every day in the natural order. At the moment of your birth you were not as large as you are now; who made you grow? Is it not that what you eat was changed into your substance?"—"But, is it possible," said the Mussulman, "that the same body of Jesus Christ is in all your churches?"—"Nothing is impossible to God," answered the bishop, "and that answer ought to suffice for you; but, to prove to you that that is not incredible, remember that if a glass is broken the same image is produced in all the pieces, and is complete in every piece. But here is a still better proof: now that I am speaking to you, are not my words heard entire by each person present? Explain to me how that is done, and you will be able to comprehend the mystery of the Eucharist." At these words the Turk remained confused, and knew not what to say; but the Christians present were edified and confirmed in their faith.—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 364.

556. *How Hosts Were Made Formerly.*—Nothing proves better, children, the profound respect which the Church bears to the Holy Eucharist than the precautions and the religious care wherewith the hosts for consecration were formerly made, and are even still made. I am very sure that you will read with interest the following curious details. They

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are related by St. Uldaric, a monk of the Abbey of Cluny, who lived in the eleventh century. "It is not allowed to work at this after eating. The wheat with which hosts should be made, however good and pure its quality may be, is, nevertheless, chosen grain by grain, and that by no others but the monks themselves. It is afterwards put in a bag, not the first that comes, but of some good material, and prepared for that express purpose. This bag is tied, then given in charge to a servant, who must be neither giddy nor frolicsome. That servant takes it immediately to the mill, washes the two millstones, and covers them with curtains above and below; he clothes himself with an alb, and puts an amice on his head, tying it so that only his eyes can be seen. He thus grinds the wheat and sifts the flour, after having first washed the sieve well. The high treasurer of the church, if he be not priest or deacon, seeks some one to finish this work in his place; he also seeks two other religious, priests or deacons, who know how to do it; they are to take with them a lay brother. These three religious, after having finished the nocturns, put on their boots, wash their face and hands, then go to the altar, where they sing lauds and prime, adding thereto the Seven Penitential Psalms and the Litany of the Saints. Afterwards the three religious who are in orders clothe themselves in albs and amices destined for that single purpose. One of them spreads flour and kneads it very firm on a clean table; it is kneaded with cold water, so that the hosts

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may become white; the two other religious serve to form the hosts. Now, the water is carried in no other vessel than that which is used to carry the water for Mass. As for the lay brother, he holds the iron instrument in which the hosts are to be baked; for that he takes care to have his hands covered with gloves. Meanwhile the monks chant the remaining portion of the office, and when the hosts are baked they sing the Office of the Blessed Virgin. They observe silence at all the hours, and take care that not only their spittle, but even their breath, does not go in any way whatever that can soil the hosts they are making. If they happen to want anything, it is only the brother that can answer the domestics. Finally, the fire is only made with wood prepared expressly for that use." All these precautions give a high idea of the sanctity of the Eucharist.—GENEVAUX, *Hist. Choisies*, 310.

557. *The Blessed Sacrament Carried on Horseback.*—One of the most edifying instances I have read, dear friends, touching the respect and veneration wherewith the Blessed Sacrament should be honored, is related in the history of the Emperors of Austria. One of the heads of that illustrious house, Rodolph, Count of Hapsburg, being one day following the chase in the mountains of Switzerland, perceived a poor priest who was much embarrassed to cross a stream swollen by rain; he had to cross it to bring the holy Viaticum to a sick person. Immediately the noble count alights from his horse, makes the priest

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mount him, and follows himself on foot with much recollection. The priest afterwards wanted to give back his horse to the prince, but the latter answered: "I do not deem myself worthy of ever again mounting a horse which has had the honor of bearing the Lord of lords; it is from Him that I hold in fief all I possess." And so saying he left his beautiful courser at the service of the poor priest and his church. The report of this so edifying event was soon noised abroad through the valleys of Switzerland, and thence into the other provinces of the German Empire; it everywhere caused a pious joy to all the people, great and small. Rodolph himself was rewarded for it in a very extraordinary manner even in this life; for, that prince having gone to visit a holy recluse, she foretold him that he should be greatly honored in this world, specially because of his having humbly given his horse for the use of the King of Heaven. And so it happened, dear friends, for Rodolph of Hapsburg became Emperor of Germany some years after, that is to say in 1273.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 68.

558. *A Host Crucified!* . . . .—There exists, dear friends, a great number of hosts that are called miraculous, because they recall prodigious facts to which they gave rise. The history of that of St. Jean-en-Grève, at Paris, is one of the most celebrated and most authentic. A poor woman, who had need of money, had borrowed from a Jewish usurer a small sum, and had given him in pledge all she had best in clothes and linen. The feast of Easter being near,

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she entreated him to lend her, at least for that great day, what she had pawned with him. "I will willingly consent," said he, "and even forgive you the whole sum I lent you, if you promise to bring me the host you will receive in communion." The desire of having her clothes again, and not being obliged to repay the sum borrowed, was for that unhappy woman a temptation which she could not resist; she promised to bring him the host, and, what is still more, she kept her promise. On the morrow she went to her parish church, and, after receiving the Sacred Host into her mouth, she hastened to take it out again, wrapped it in a handkerchief, and brought it to the wretched Jew to whom she had promised it. It was to gratify his hatred of Our Lord that this abominable man wanted to have a host; he treated it with the greatest indignity, and Jesus Christ constantly showed him how sensible He was to the outrages offered Him. He first put the host on a table, and struck it repeatedly with a penknife; blood immediately flowed from it in abundance, which caused the man's wife and children to shudder with horror He then nailed it to a wall and brutally struck it; then he pierced it with a lance, to renew the frightful torments of Our Lord's Passion. It then shed blood anew, as though to prove to the execrable wretch that it was not merely material bread. He threw it in the fire, and it was seen flying here and there without receiving any injury. The infernal rage that animated the Jew led him to throw it into a pot of boil-

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ing water; the water took the color of blood, and the host then appeared visibly under the very form of Christ crucified! This sight so terrified this deicide Jew that he went to hide himself in a dark corner of his house; but it was not long before his crime was discovered, and in this way. One of his children, seeing people going to church, cried out simply: "Do not go to church any more to seek your God; don't you know my father killed Him?" A woman, hearing what he said, entered the house under pretence of asking some fire, and she saw the host which was still under the form of Jesus on the cross; but it soon resumed its former shape, and came to repose in the little vessel the woman had in her hand. All amazed, the latter carried her treasure religiously to the Church of St. Jean-en-Grève. Information was given to the magistrate. The Jew, nowise sorry for his fault, was condemned to be burned alive; but his wife, his children, and many other Jews were converted. The house wherein Our Lord showed that he is really in the Blessed Sacrament was changed into a church; and, in course of time, it was served by Carmelite monks. The religious who inhabited it were charged with repairing, by a perpetual adoration, the outrages offered to Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of His love. This sad event took place in 1250.—Lassausse, *Explic. du Cat. de l'Empire*, 498.

559. *The Holy Eucharist and a Robber.*—If ever you have occasion to go to Turin, the capital of Piedmont, be sure to go and see the church of *Corpus*

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Domini, that is to say, the Body of Our Lord. This is the miraculous fact which caused its erection; it has reference to the holy Eucharist. A sacrilegious robber having slipped into a church in Turin, stripped the tabernacle, and loaded his horse with all the sacred vessels, having first thrown out the sacred hosts. At the dawn of day he was preparing to go away, when his horse fell down on his forefeet; the repeated blows of the robber could not make him rise. People assemble, they gather round him; by degrees they begin to suspect something extraordinary, and lay their hands on his burden. A glance reveals to their terror-stricken eyes the sacred vessels. And instantly, an adorable host, which had lain hidden in the bottom of a ciborium, escapes and rises all radiant in the air to a considerable height. The report of the miracle soon spread throughout the city; the archbishop immediately ordered a general procession, at the head of which he came himself. In presence of the whole city assembled, he presented a chalice to the sacred host, which descended into it perpendicularly, and was carried to St. John's, the metropolitan church of Turin. In memory of this great event, a magnificent church was built in the same place; a balustrade may still be seen, on the base of which these words are read in Latin: *It was here the horse stopped.* Every year the diocese celebrates this prodigy by a festival, and the city of Turin, in particular, by a solemn procession. This prodigious event, preserved in the municipal records, took

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place in 1453, on the 6th of June, under the pontificate of Pope Nicholas V., and the reign of Count Louis of Savoy. It was the son of the latter, the blessed Amadeus Romagno, who received the sacred host, for it was he who was then archbishop of Turin. Besides what I have said, the diocese of that name celebrates it in a still more pompous manner every fifty years; and since that time, there exists a body of canons intended to celebrate that memorable event, in the church of *Corpus Domini*. The last fifty years' jubilee was solemnized in 1853.—Abbé Favre, *Le Ciel Ouvert*, 148.

560. *The Miraculous Host of Faverney.*—France, too, my very dear children, has had her miraculous hosts; one of the most celebrated is that of Faverney, in the department of the Upper-Saone. This event took place, in the Church of Notre Dame, on the 25th of May, 1608. There was usually, at the Feast of Pentecost, a great concourse of the faithful, who came to gain a plenary indulgence granted by the Holy See. It was the custom, for that solemnity, to erect a wooden altar, richly decorated, whereon the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. A taper, placed too near a curtain, having taken fire, the altar and *reposoir*, with all their ornaments, were burned in an instant. Surprising thing, the Blessed Sacrament was not only undamaged by the flames, but it remained suspended in the air without any support, and that for thirty-three hours, to the great astonishment of the multitude, who flocked from all parts to

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contemplate this prodigy. A priest of the neighborhood came in procession with all his people, and prepared to celebrate Mass at the high altar. Whilst he was saying it the Blessed Sacrament went of itself to place itself on that altar, after the elevation. All this took place in sight of an immense multitude of spectators, from amongst whom were chosen fifty witnesses, the best instructed and most trustworthy. The Archbishop of Besançon, Mgr. Ferdinand de Longwy, after the most critical investigation, caused the account of this miraculous host to be printed and published, and from that period, that is to say, for more than two hundred and fifty years, the memory of it is preserved in the little town of Faverney, and throughout the diocese of Besançon.—Abbé Favre, *Le Ciel Ouvert*, 179.

561. *Our Lord Appears in the Blessed Sacrament.*—Our Lord is truly in the Eucharist, none of you doubts it, dear friends, but He is there in a manner invisible to the eyes of the body. Nevertheless, He has sometimes been pleased to show Himself in a sensible manner; here is one instance of it, which took place in France not quite two hundred years ago. It was in the village of the Ulmes-de-Saint-Florant, in the department of Maine-et-Loire. It was on the Saturday within the Octave of Corpus Christi, the 2d of June, in the year 1666. The whole population being assembled in the church for the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, at the very moment when the priest entoned the *Verbum caro, panem verum*, there

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appeared in place of the host a real human figure. His hair was almost black, and falling on his shoulders; his face appeared brilliant, and in his mien shone a superhuman majesty; he was clothed in white, and his hands were crossed. The priest, who was the first to perceive it, invited his parishioners aloud to come and assure themselves of the fact, saying: "If any one here is incredulous, let him approach." People did approach, and enjoyed the spectacle for full a quarter of an hour, when a little cloud, covering the figure, concealed it from human eyes; the cloud itself soon disappeared, and the host was seen in its former state. This astounding fact soon reached the ears of Mgr. Henri Arnaud, who was then Bishop of Angers; he went immediately to the place, heard the witnesses, and found, by the strictest inquiry, that the fact was unquestionably true, which induced him to attest to the whole Church the truth of this miracle by a mandamus, which was circulated all through France. This story, dear friends, will, doubtless, edify your piety, but I would fain believe that it will add nothing to your faith, which ought to be entire and absolute in regard to the mysteries and truths of religion.—Abbé Favre, *Le Ciel Ouvert*, 164.

562. *Story of an Irreligious Barber.*—I know not, dear friends, if you remember the story of a robber in Turin, who had the frightful misfortune to profane the Blessed Sacrament in 1453. I will only tell you now that a solemn commemoration is every year made of it, and a more solemn one still every fifty years.

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In 1803, during the invasion of Piedmont by the French, the procession of the jubilee made on that occasion was going on in Turin. An impious barber, after having scoffed and ridiculed a person whom he was shaving, because he was going to join the procession, went himself from his shop to see it pass. He affected to keep his hat on his head, and would not take it off after being repeatedly told to do so. He thus braved the pious ceremony and the Blessed Sacrament in the most insolent and obstinate manner. But, at the moment when the priest who carried the divine Eucharist passed before him, the justice of God overtook him: he fell dead on the ground, in presence of the innumerable crowd of spectators, who regarded this awful death as the just punishment of his impiety. This event produced such a sensation, that the police magistrate caused the wretched man's body to be exposed for thirty-six hours at the door of the City Hall. A number of persons, eye-witnesses of this tragical death, related this fact just as I have told it; several of these are living still, or were a few years ago.—Abbé Favre, *Le Ciel Ouvert*, 197.

563. *Sacrilegious Parody on the Eucharist.*—I have either read or heard told a great number of tragical stories touching the Holy Eucharist; but, my good friends, here is one which, short as it is, singularly struck me. I read it in a very interesting book entitled the *Historical Catechism*, published in Germany some years ago. In the village of Edinghausen,

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situate not far from the town of Bielfeld, in Rhenish Prussia, an impious blasphemer of religion took it into his head one day to turn the Holy Eucharist into derision. He sits down to table with some companions, who were not at all as impious as he, but who were still no great things. He takes some bread and wine, and pronounces over it, with mock solemnity, the words of consecration: *This is my body! This is my blood!* After this sacrilegious parody he distributes them amongst his companions, telling them with an ironical smile: *Take ye, all!* When he had given some to all, and his own turn came to take bread and wine, he felt unwell, let his head fall on his chest, and in a few seconds ceased to live! This took place on the 5th of January, 1807. The wretch was buried outside the cemetery, precisely on the feast of the Epiphany. May this tragical and lamentable story be a salutary warning for wretches who scoff and sneer at holy mysteries, and turn into ridicule the truths of religion!—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 146.

564. *A General Carrying the Canopy.*—How happy are those amongst you, my good little friends, who have the honor of being altar boys! They approach the good God, one may say, more nearly. This is especially true as regards the Blessed Sacrament. Listen: Some months before a celebrated Austrian General, Baron Geramb, entered the novitiate of the reverend Trappist Fathers, whilst he still wore his brilliant general's uniform, he met, in one of the principal streets of Lyons, a priest carrying the holy viati

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cum to a sick person. No sooner had he perceived it than he threw himself on his knees and adored Our Lord with the liveliest emotion. But when the priest came up to where he was, he observed with pain that the two altar boys who held the canopy over the priest were quarrelling between themselves, making threatening gestures, and elbowing each other. At this sight the pious baron snatched the pole of the canopy from the one who appeared the most insolent, and sent him off. The priest, turning round, to his great surprise, perceived the general who had taken the place of the altar boy. No less great was the admiration of the crowd which had gathered to the place or was following the Blessed Sacrament. The Baron de Geramb, who had exhibited such great devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament, was obliged to make a long circuit, as the priest had to administer to two persons whose dwellings were at a considerable distance one from the other. Hence it was that, after having accompanied the Blessed Sacrament all the way, having returned to the church, the priest thanked him most kindly; but the brave and pious general was quite surprised, for he thought he had only done his duty as a good Christian.—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 73.

565. *God's Sentry.*—I am sure I have never told you, dear friends, a prettier story than the following, especially as regards the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. You know that nothing is more amiable than the French soldier, especially the Christian soldier. There

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is in his faith so much loyalty and sincerity! At times it may, indeed, manifest itself in a strange, original manner, but it is always full of meaning. Some years ago, I believe it was in 1847, a soldier who had attended regularly at the St. Francis Xavier meetings, in Paris, went to Orleans with his regiment. Now, from the arrival of this new regiment, the pastor of the cathedral had remarked with surprise a soldier who, from one in the afternoon till three, remained standing motionless, straight as a pillar, in the middle of the church before the grating of the sanctuary. The good priest was very anxious to know what this might mean. One day a captain came to visit the cathedral with his lady, who was very pious. The priest brings him into the sacristy, tells him what was going on and adds: "Wait a moment, it is almost the time, and I am sure you shall see this singular soldier." True enough, when the hour strikes, the soldier arrives, says a short prayer, and takes his post. The captain looks and exclaims: "Why, it is my confidential soldier! an excellent soldier and a fine fellow!" He is sent for to the sacristy. "And what are you doing here?" said his officer to him. "Captain, I am keeping two hours' sentry for the good God; you see, captain, He is stronger than I, and warms my blood. There are sentries everywhere. In Paris, there are four for the President; here, my general has two, my colonel one. For the prefect a sentry, for the bishop a sentry, and so on. When I came here, I said to myself: 'The good God is some-

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thing more than all these people, well! there is no sentry for Him. So I keep sentry for Him when I am at liberty, and I assure you the time is not long, for I love Him as you do yourself, captain!" The captain had the happiness of being a Christian all his life. You may imagine the sweet satisfaction experienced by the happy witnesses of this scene. They congratulated the religious soldier, and encouraged him to continue on duty for the good God.—*Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. LXXVIII., p. 5.

II.—ON THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

566. *A Saint Unwilling to Say Mass.*—It is something so great, so sublime, dear friends, the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, that no one is ever too well prepared to offer it. There were bishops, saints even, who did not dare to celebrate Mass when they had some slight faults wherewith to reproach themselves. Here is a fine example of it, taken from the life of St. John Chrysostom. Being one day at an assembly of bishops in Constantinople, of which he was patriarch, one amongst them, named Eusebius, who was Bishop of Cibiana, in Lydia, declared himself the accuser of Antoninus, Bishop of Ephesus, his metropolitan, and presented a memorial against him, containing seven points of accusation. St. Chrysostom said to him kindly and gently: "Brother Eusebius, accusations which are made through passion are often not easy to prove; take my advice,

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do not accuse brother Antoninus in writing, and we will try to arrange this affair." But Eusebius grew warm, and, carried away by anger, absolutely persisted in his accusation. St. Chrysostom requested Paul of Heraclea, who was a friend of Antoninus, to reconcile them; then he rose with the bishops, who were twenty-two in number, and entered the church, for it was the time for the Holy Sacrifice. Having saluted the people as usual, wishing them peace, he seated himself in the chair with the other bishops. During this time Eusebius came towards him, and, in presence of all the people and the assembled bishops, he presented to St. John Chrysostom another memorial, containing the same charges, and adjuring him by the most terrible oaths to do him justice in that affair. The holy patriarch, seeing his anger, and anxious that the people might not be disturbed thereby, received this memorial; but, after the public reading of the Holy Scripture, according to custom, he begged Pansophius, Bishop of Pisidia, to offer the Holy Sacrifice in his place. For himself, he left the church with the other bishops, for he would not celebrate Mass with his mind agitated, following that saying of the Gospel: "If you are offering your gift at the altar, and remember that your brother has anything against you, leave there your gift, and go first to be reconciled with your brother." St. Chrysostom applied these words literally to himself; although he had nothing to reproach himself with on this sad occasion, he would not celebrate Mass him-

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self, merely because he had been a little disturbed, and knew that Bishop Eusebius had something against him. A great lesson for us, dear friends, when we are preparing to assist at the Holy Sacrifice or to receive Holy Communion.—PALLADIUS, *Life of St. John Crysostom.*

567. *Singular Vision of Witikind.*—Although we know very well, my good little friends, that Our Lord Jesus Christ is really present in the altar after the consecration, we would, perhaps, be very glad to see Him in a sensible manner. This favor God has sometimes granted for reasons worthy of His wisdom and His goodness. The most curious story I know on this subject is what happened to the famous Witikind, duke of the Saxons, one of the most barbarous nations of Germany in the eighth century. When he was still a pagan, and maintaining an obstinate war against Charlemagne, Emperor of the Franks, this valiant duke was curious to know what was passing in the camp of the Christians; for that purpose, he disguised himself as a pilgrim. It was precisely at the time of the festival of Easter, when the whole Frankish army was engaged in fulfilling the duty of Paschal Communion. He enters the camp without being recognized, he admires the ceremonies of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and assists thereat with an attention and a pious curiosity, little to be expected from a barbarian and a pagan. But what surprised him the most was to see in each host which the priest distributed to the soldiers for holy com-

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munion, a child of admirable beauty all radiant with light. This divine child seemed to enter with extreme joy the mouths of some, whilst he struggled not to enter that of some others. This miraculous vision, on which he afterwards took care to obtain instruction, was one of the causes which determined him to embrace the Christian religion and make all his subjects embrace it; which happened in the year 804, as you may have already read in the history of France. —Rodriguez, *Practice of Chris. Perf.*, IV., 319.

568. *The Communions of a Bad Priest.*—Oh! my friends, if it were given us to see what passes in regard to persons who receive Holy Communion! How delighted we should be to see some, and how deeply afflicted to see others! We read in *Christian Perfection* a singular fact which relates to that. A holy man, whose name I have forgotten, was one day at Mass, which was said by a priest who was rather worldly. What was his surprise, at the moment of Communion, to see a charming child, surrounded by luminous rays, reposing on the patten, in place of the species of bread! He was more astonished afterwards, for he saw that when the priest went to take Communion, the child turned away his head, straggling with his hands and feet, as if to prevent the priest from receiving him into his mouth. The same saint had several other times the same vision, which gave him much thought. One day this secular priest, who was not bad at bottom, was conversing with him, and confessed that as often as he received the

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body of Our Lord at Mass he had great trouble in taking it, and knew not how that could come. The servant of God was very glad of this confidence; he took occasion to tell the priest what he had himself seen, and advised him to examine his conscience well and change his life. Touched by this kind admonition, and the warning he had received, the priest applied himself to become more edifying. Some time after, the holy man who had warned him, assisting again at his Mass, perceived the same child between his hands, at the time of Holy Communion, and saw him enter into his mouth and his heart joyfully and eagerly, which proved the sincerity of his conversion. Rodriguez, *Chris. Perf.*, IV., 320.

569. *Cure of a Lady at Mass.*—It would take whole volumes, my dear children, to relate all the miracles that have been accomplished by means of the holy sacrifice of the Mass. St. Bernard wrought a great number of the sort; his life contains several which took place, as one may say, before the whole city of Milan. One day, at the moment when he was going to celebrate Mass, there was brought to the Church of St. Ambrose a lady of distinction. This lady had been dreadfully afflicted for several years; she had lost at once sight, hearing, and speech; her tongue even had lengthened so that it protruded from her mouth in a monstrous way. St. Bernard exhorted all the people present to unite their prayers with his, and began to celebrate the divine mysteries, making the sign of the cross over the

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poor infirm woman every time he made it over the host or the chalice. Having finished the Lord's Prayer, he took the body of Jesus Christ, placed it on the patten, which he laid on the woman's head, and prayed Our Lord to cure her. After that, he turned to the altar, to finish the Holy Sacrifice. When he had made the division of the host, and distributed the Communion to the people, the infirm lady, who was placed near the altar, felt herself suddenly cured; her tongue resumed its natural state, and she recovered at the same time sight, hearing, and speech. Quite transported with joy, she came to throw herself at the feet of St. Bernard, and returned a thousand, thousand thanks to the Lord. A cry of admiration rose from every part of the church; the bells rang joyously out, the people ran in crowds to see the person so miraculously cured, and the whole city magnified the power of God, so wonderfully manifested in that miraculous cure.—Abbé Favre, *Le Ciel Ouvert*, 210.

570. *Two Pages of the Court of Lisbon.*—It is an excellent thing to hear Mass every day, dear friends, or, at least, as often as one can without failing in the duties of their state. It is related in the life of St. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal, and niece of St. Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, that she was extremely charitable to the poor. She had ordered her almoner never to refuse charity to any one whatsoever; but, over and above that, she also gave continual alms by her own hands or those of her domestics. She usu-

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ally employed, for that purpose, a young page named Don Pedro, in whom she had discovered great piety. Another page, whether through envy of him or to ingratiate himself with King Denis, husband of St. Elizabeth, accused Don Pedro of having a secret understanding with the queen. Although the king did not absolutely give credence to this story, still, as he was already somewhat displeased with his wife, and some suspicion arose in his mind, he resolved in his own mind to get rid secretly of the accused page. The means he adopted for that purpose were rather extraordinary; passing that same day by a kiln where they were baking lime, he sent for the people whose business it was to keep up the fire, and told them that, on the following morning, he would send a page to ask them *if they had executed his orders*, and that they must not fail, as soon as he uttered those words, to throw him immediately into the fire. Thereupon he returned to his palace, sent for the suspected page, and ordered him to go next morning early to give the message in question. But, my friends, God, who always takes care of His own, ordained it so that, as he passed by a church on his way to the limekiln, he heard the bell which announced the Elevation of the Host at Mass. Piety having induced him to enter the church, he heard the rest of that Mass, and two others that were said one after the other. Meanwhile King Denis, impatient to know if he had been obeyed, meets by chance in his ante-chamber the wicked page who had accused the

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queen, and commands him to go in haste to ask the men at the limekiln if they had done as he ordered. The page runs thither without a moment's delay, and delivers his message; but, no sooner did they hear what he was directed to say, than, taking him for the one of whom the king had spoken, they seized him and threw him into the fire. The other, who had, during this time, finished his devotions, went to do his errand; and being informed that the king's orders had been obeyed, he returned to Denis with the answer. Imagine the king's anger and amazement when he saw that things had turned out so differently from what he expected. He asked Don Pedro where he had stopped so long. The page answered unsuspectingly: "Prince, as I passed by a church, on my way to the place where your Majesty had sent me, I heard the bell for the Elevation, and was induced to go in; I remained till the end of the Mass. But just as it was finishing another was commenced, and then a third, before the other was finished, and I heard them all, because my father, when giving me his last blessing before he died, told me, above all things, to hear to the end every Mass I saw commenced." Then the king, entering into himself, easily understood that all that did not happen without the express permission of God; he adored the Divine Providence, and banished from his mind all the injurious suspicions he had conceived against his wife, whom he venerated ever after as a saint.—*Life of St. Elizabeth of Portugal.*

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571. *Why, then, do I not see the Sacred Host?*—The venerable Thomas à Kempis, who is thought to have been the author of the *Imitation of Christ*, relates that a holy priest, who lived in the same monastery, going one day on some business to another convent some distance off, met on the way a man of the world, with whom he entered into conversation. After some familiar discourse, they came to speak of the things of God, and the stranger said to him: "Father, I am going to tell you a thing that formerly happened to myself. One day, while hearing Mass, I was much surprised on not seeing the Host in the hands of the priest. I at first imagined that it was because of the weakness of my sight, or that I was at too great a distance from the altar; I moved very close to it, but still without seeing any better that way than the other. That continued for the space of a year. At length, not knowing to what cause I was to attribute it, and finding myself in a strange perplexity of mind, I resolved to speak of it to a wise director. After having maturely examined the thing, he found that I had long nourished a secret hatred against one of my neighbors, for an injury I had received, and would never forgive. The fact was unhappily true; my confessor, seeing such a great hardness of heart, represented to me the unhappy state in which I was, admonished and exhorted me several times, and at length told me that nothing else was the cause of my not seeing the Sacred Host. He added that it would be vain for me to hope to obtain that

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favor or the remission of my sins, if I did not forgive the injuries that had been done me. I acknowledge, father, that I was so touched by the words of my confessor, that thenceforward I entirely forgave my enemy. When I finished my confession, and had received penance and absolution, I entered the church, heard Mass, and saw the holy Host without any trouble. So, ever since, I never cease to return thanks to God for such a favor, and to bless Him continually for so many other wonders which He every day works on behalf of His servants.—RODRIGUEZ, *Chris. Perf.*, I., 357.

572. *The Sacrifice of the Cross and the Altar* —You have not forgotten, my very dear children, the relation there is between the sacrifice of the cross and that of the altar. I have just now a very curious fact to relate to you on that subject. After the miserable Henry VIII., King of England, had consummated the schism and heresy of the Anglican Church, there long existed severe penal enactments against those who had the courage to practise the Catholic religion; a heavy fine was even imposed on those who assisted at Mass. It happened one day that a fervent Catholic, who enjoyed a large fortune, was condemned to pay five hundred gold pieces, because he had dared to fulfil publicly that duty of religion. The gentleman was very happy in that he was judged worthy to endure this persecution. He sought out the finest pieces of Portuguese gold that were to be had, because they bore the imprint of a cross, and

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went himself to present the entire sum in the court of law. As he counted out the beautiful new coin before the Protestant official, the latter asked him, in a jeering tone, what was the reason of his selecting such beautiful pieces to pay the fine. To this ironical question the Catholic gentleman merely replied: "I would think it wrong to pay with common and ordinary money the favor I received in being enabled to adore my Lord and Saviour in the holy sacrament of the altar. Know, sir, that between the cross you see stamped on this coin and the holy sacrifice of the altar, there exist numerous points of analogy; both are, in fact, monuments of Our Saviour's infinite love, and no Catholic may ignore them." And so saying he went on quietly counting out the five hundred gold pieces which had permitted him to assist at the holy sacrifice. Which of you is there, dear friends, that would be willing to pay so dear for such a happiness?—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 170.

573. *What One Gains by Going to Mass.*—There are some persons who say, "Oh! I have not time to go to Mass every day." My friends, beware of thinking that lost time; on the contrary, you cannot employ it better. Listen: It is related of two mechanics, who worked at the same trade, and lived in the same village, in the former province of Franche-Comté, that one of them being burdened with a large number of children, and never missing hearing Mass every day, lived very comfortably; whilst the

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other, on the contrary, who had only himself and his wife to support, went rarely to Mass, and worked night and day, even on holydays, had the greatest trouble in the world to live. He had already remarked many times that his neighbor's affairs seemed to go on well; he one day took it into his head to ask him where he got the means of supporting so large a family so well as he did, since he, who had but his wife, and worked incessantly, often wanted the necessaries of life. The other answered him: "Come to me tomorrow morning early, and I will show you whence I draw all my profit." On the morrow they met early, and the fortunate workman took the other to church to hear Mass, after which he left him, telling him to go to his work, for it was getting late. He did the same on the following day, but having gone a third time, to make him do the same thing, the other said: "My friend, I am much obliged to you, but if I want to go to Mass, I have no need of your taking me, I know the way very well. I only want to know where it is that you find so much to earn, so that I may go with you and see if I cannot make something, too."—"That is just what I wanted to tell you, but I know no place where there is so much to gain, both for this life and the other, as at church. A proof of this is that I have remarked that my business never goes on so well as when I have commenced my day by hearing Mass. Try it yourself, and you will see." The other did so, dear friends, and it was not long before he was convinced of the truth of what his neighbor said.—Rodriguez, *Chris. Perf.*, IV., 353.

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III. ON THE HOLY COMMUNION.

574. *Communion of a Child a Year Old.*—It was the custom in the first ages of the Church, as I think I have already told you, my very dear friends, to administer the Holy Eucharist to little children, whilst they were still in their baptismal innocence. St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, who was martyred in 258, relates a very extraordinary fact on this subject, of which he was himself a witness. At the time of the great persecution of the Emperor Decius, a father and mother took flight so hastily that they left behind them, in a cradle, a little girl still on the breast. Her nurse, who would not be encumbered with her brought her to the magistrates of Carthage; as she was scarcely a year old, and unable to eat anything solid, they made her swallow some bread, which they had soaked in wine offered to the idols, in order that she might be regarded as no longer a Christian. Some time after, this little girl was restored to her mother, who, not knowing what had happened, took her with her to a house where the Christians were secretly assisting at the holy sacrifice of the Mass. A strange thing, and one that shows, dear friends, with what purity of heart we should participate in the Holy Mysteries, the little girl could not remain a moment quiet after the Offertory; she cried, she struggled, tormenting her mother, and seeming as though she were trying to explain by signs what had passed before the magistrates. At the moment of

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Holy Communion, the deacon went amongst the faithful, according to the pious custom of that time presenting the chalice which contained the blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Each one drank a little, because then the laity themselves communicated under both species. Coming to the little girl, the deacon would have her swallow some drops; but the poor child began to stamp and kick, to turn away her head, close her lips, and push away the chalice with her little hands. They succeeded, nevertheless, in making her swallow some drops of the consecrated wine; but immediately her stomach turned, and she threw up all she had taken. The precious blood of Christ could not remain in a heart which had been defiled by the presence of wine offered to idols. If such was Our Lord's repugnance to enter the heart of a child, who knew not what it did, with what horror he must descend into hearts defiled by sin!—Genevaux, *Hist. Chois.*, 237.

575. *The Host in the Mire!* . . . .—Would it not be an abominable crime, my friends, to let a Sacred Host fall on the ground through neglect? But it is a much more heinous one to place it in a defiled heart. I remember a fact which has some relation to that. In the Monastery of Philoxenes, situate in the Island of Cyprus, lived a poor man, who wept incessantly for several years, by night as well as by day. One day a celebrated religious, named John Mosch, having come with several others to visit this monastery, was strangely surprised at sight of this singular monk.

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He was asked to suspend the course of his tears, and tell them the cause of a grief so extraordinary. "Father!" they said to him, "why do you weep so? Know you not that it is only God alone who is without sin?"—"Ah! Fathers, you never found in the whole world a sinner like unto me; no, there is no crime to equal that which I had the misfortune to commit, and for which I will never cease asking pardon of God. Hear me and judge for yourselves: When I was still in the world my wife and I had the misfortune to follow the heresy of the Severians. Returning home one day, I was surprised not to find my wife; I asked for her and sought her some time. I learned then that she was gone to the house of a neighbor, who was a Catholic; that she was converted, and they were to communicate together that same morning. Full of rage on hearing this, I ran to the neighbor's house to prevent it; but it was too late; I arrived at the very moment when my wife was receiving Holy Communion. Listening only to my impious rage, I threw myself upon her, seized her by the throat, and never let go my hold till she had thrown up the Sacred Host." Here the penitent monk stopped a moment, overcome with grief. At length he resumed: "The Holy Host fell into the mire; but, to the great surprise of all who witnessed this sacrilegious scene, it appeared all luminous, and we prostrated ourselves to adore it. As for me, two days after there appeared to me a devil, black as an Ethiopian, who said to me only these words: *We are*

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both condemned to the same torment. I was seriously frightened at my crime, gave up my heresy, became a Catholic, and came to shut myself up in this monastery, where, as you see, I have nothing better to do than weep my crime; oh! that I may obtain pardon from the mercy of God!"—JOHN MOSCH, *Pré Spirituel*, Ch. XXX.

576. *A Sacrilegious Communion in the Ninth Century.*—There are few examples of a sacrilegious Communion and its awful consequences which have impressed me so much as that of Lothaire, king of Lorraine, who lived in the ninth century. In contempt of the laws of Christianity, he had broken the sacred ties which united him to Queen Thietberge, his lawful wife, to marry another named Valrade. Pope Nicholas having condemned this second marriage and excommunicated the criminal, the latter wrote to his successor, Adrian III., demanding permission to justify himself at Rome, and praying to be allowed to visit the tomb of the holy Apostles. Adrian deemed it his duty to accede to his wishes, and the artful prince having gone to him, made every submission requisite to win his favor. After having promised all that was required of him, he wished above all things that the Pope should solemnly reconcile him to the Church, celebrating the Holy Mysteries in his presence, and giving him Communion with his own hand. Adrian consented, provided that the king of Lorraine had kept up no connection, even by word, with Valrade, since Pope Nicholas excommunicated

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him. Things being so arranged, the blind Lothaire secretly applauded himself, not thinking that he was on the eve of furnishing, in his own person, one of the most terrible examples of the punishment of unworthy Communions. At the appointed time, the Pope celebrated Mass in his presence. At the moment of Communion, taking in his hand the body of Jesus Christ, and turning towards Lothaire: "Prince," said he, in a loud, distinct voice, "if you are guilty of no crime with Valrade, since you were warned by Pope Nicholas, and if you have made a firm resolution to have no further connection with her, approach with confidence and receive the sacrament of eternal life. But if your repentance is not sincere, do not rashly receive the body and blood of Our Lord, and by profaning them, to eat and drink your own condemnation." Lothaire, doubtless, shuddered at these words, but he had resolved to commit the crime, and he did. He even added perjury to sacrilege, and, sooner than recede, he plunged into the abyss pointed out to him beneath his feet. The Pope then addressing the noblemen who were receiving Communion with the king, he said to each of them: "If you have neither contributed nor consented to your master's crimes with Valrade, and if you have not communicated with the other persons anathematized by the Holy See, may the body of Our Lord be to you a pledge of eternal life." The horror of the sacrilege made some draw back, but the greater part received Communion with the king.

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After this fatal Communion, Lothaire dined with the Pope and made him magnificent presents. He, in his turn, received one from Adrian, and some days after set out in high glee. But scarcely had he reached Lucca, when himself and almost all his train were attacked by a malignant fever, which produced the strangest and most frightful effects. The hair, nails, and even the skin, fell off, whilst an inward fire consumed them. Most of them died under the eyes of the king, who, nevertheless, failed not to continue his voyage, solely occupied with the object of his blind passion. He got as far as Pleasance, but there he lost both sense and speech, and died miserably without giving any signs of repentance. It was observed that all those who had profaned with him the body of Our Lord, died in the same way; those, on the contrary, who had withdrawn from the Holy Table, where the only ones spared by death; thus no one could mistake the vengeance of Heaven.—REYRE, *Anec. Chret.*, 71.

577. *A Religious who went too often to Communion.* —However holy Communion may be, my friends, we must not approach it too often, unless we labor with all our might to correct our faults, and even our least imperfections. Otherwise one would be much exposed to become familiar with that precious food, and would derive no benefit from it. St. Teresa relates, on this subject, that she had, in one of her Spanish monasteries, a woman who passed for a Saint, and really was so, but did not sufficiently dis-

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trust herself, as I am about to tell you. She received Communion every day, and yet she had no particular confessor; she went now to one, now to another. St. Teresa, carefully observing her, perceived that the woman gained nothing from this little spiritual vagabondism, if I may use that singular expression. The sequel proved that the Saint was not mistaken. This good woman fell dangerously ill; then, to satisfy her somewhat injudicious piety, she became so urgent in her entreaties that she at length obtained the privilege of having Mass said every day in her chamber, and Communion given her each time. Her illness was of long duration; the priest who said Mass for her, an enlightened and prudent man, did not like her receiving so often without necessity, and especially without spiritual profit for her perfection. One day, therefore, he took it into his head to say Mass, as usual, in her chamber, but not to give her Communion. And behold, children, how St. Teresa was right in fearing that there was underneath all this piety something human and imperfect; this woman, seeing that Communion was not given her that day, fell into such a passion, that she died immediately, leaving to all the witnesses of that painful scene an example very fit to make them reflect.—D. Gueranger, *Hist. Chois.*, 403.

578. *Eulogium on Communion by Frederick the Great.*—I like much the testimonies given to our holy religion by men who have not the courage to practise it. Of this number is Frederick the Great,

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King of Prussia, an infidel prince. After the Seven Years' War General Ziethen became one of his most frequent guests; he even occupied the place of honor, unless there were princes at table with the king. One day, when he had received one of these frequent invitations to dine with the king, he prayed Frederick to excuse him: "Tell his Majesty that this is the day on which I am accustomed to go to Communion, and I do not wish to put myself in the way of any distraction." Some days after, when he appeared again at Sans Souci Castle, the king said to him: "Well! Ziethen, how did your Communion go off the other day?" At these words all the courtiers burst out laughing. But Ziethen suddenly rose, shaking his head, approached Frederick, and, bowing before him, said gravely and firmly; "Your Majesty ought to know that I have dreaded no danger, and that I have fought courageously for you and the country. What I have done I am ready to do again, when your Majesty commands me. But there is One above us mightier than you, than I, than all mankind; that is Our Lord Jesus Christ, who shed His blood to redeem the world. I will never allow any one to insult Him, in my presence, even in jest, for in Him is my faith, my hope, my consolation. It is with this religious sentiment that your army has gained so many victories; if, then, you wish to renounce it, renounce also the prosperity of the State. There is what I have to say; pray excuse me!" The king, much affected, held out his right hand to the religious gen-

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eral, and, laying his left hand on his shoulder: "Happy Ziethen," said he, "I respect your religion. Preserve it carefully, and be sure that what has now taken place never shall again in my presence." What think you of this testimony, my friends?—*Magacin pittoresque, Année* 1844, 207.

579. *When an Unworthy Communion is to be Made.*—There is in Scripture, children, a tremendous saying! it is St. Paul who speaks: *The word of God*, says he, *is a two-edged sword;* that is to say, if it do not make us better, it will make us worse. Well! it applies still more strongly to the Holy Eucharist. So, listen: A robber chief had amongst his brigands, an unhappy young man, who appeared to have great trouble in accustoming himself to crime; his conscience did not seem to have as yet quite stifled remorse; do you know what means he gave him to harden him to every crime? "*Go and make a bad Communion!*" said the chief to him one day, "and you will be sure to fear nothing." The unhappy young man followed this diabolical advice, and soon became the most determined of all the band; so true it is, children, than one is capable of doing anything when they have had the frightful misfortune of deliberately making a sacrilegious Communion.—Schmid & Brown, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 94.

580. *The Way to Make a Good Communion.*—Persons who have the happiness of communicating often are much exposed to do it through habit, and, consequently, to lose the merit of it. Here is the method

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that was employed by a worthy man, an excellent Christian, who was obliged to live in the world, but wished to preserve himself from the dangers that are found in it. He referred his whole life to the Holy Communion. His confessor permitted him to communicate every Sunday; then he was occupied the whole week with that great action. He prepared himself for it during the three last days of the week, and the three days that followed were employed in thanksgiving. Thus, Thursday was for him a day of faith and adoration towards Our Lord, really present in the Blessed Eucharist. He said incessantly all that day: "My God, I believe, but increase my faith; my God, I adore Thee!" Friday was a day of hope, during which he humbled himself much and asked pardon: "My God, I hope in Thee; despise not my heart, which is humbled and broken with grief." Saturday was a day of love and of desire to unite himself with Jesus Christ: "O Jesus! my beloved! come to me; I run to Thee!" Sunday, the day on which he made his Communion at seven o'clock Mass, was wholly consecrated to enjoyment, joy, and consolation; it was a true festival day: "I am in Jesus, and Jesus is in me! who can, henceforth, separate me from Him?" Monday was, for this good man, the first day of thanksgiving; he never ceased saying: "How shall I thank Thee worthily, O my God! for the rich present Thou hast made me?" Tuesday was a day of offering and consecrating himself to God: "Lord, Thou hast given Thyself entirely

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to me; I wish to give myself entirely to Thee." Finally, Wednesday was specially a day of prayer and supplication: "What wilt Thou refuse me, O Lord! Thou who givest me Thyself?" There is how he passed the whole week; and, when Thursday came, he commenced over again this exercise for the following Communion. I am very sure, dear friends, that that man derived from his Communions all the profit that it is possible to derive; let us do like him, and we shall certainly become Saints, since the Imitation positively tells us, that it requires but one single Communion well made to become a Saint.—LASSAUSSE, *Explic. du Cat. de l'Empire*, 553.

IV.—ON FIRST COMMUNION.

581. *A First Communion Well Prepared For.*—None of you is ignorant, dear children, that the First Communion is the greatest and holiest thing you have to do. I am now going to give you a beautiful model of the way in which you ought to prepare for it. The young Italian, Albini, not being yet old enough to make his First Communion, contented himself with sighing incessantly after the happy day on which he could receive his God, and neglected nothing to prepare for so holy an action. He had such a lively horror of sin that he avoided even the appearance of evil; he even said very often that he would never suffer the devil to enter his heart before Jesus Christ. He studied the catechism with con-

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stant application, and instructed himself in all that concerns the Adorable Sacrament of our altars. The innocence of his life, the extreme desire he showed for Holy Communion, and the earnestness with which he prepared himself for it, induced the priest who was charged with the direction of his conscience to admit him sooner than children are usually received. It was the most welcome news to him. He thanked the priest with the liveliest transports of joy, and from that moment he thought only of redoubling his efforts to purify his heart, and prepare for Our Lord a dwelling worthy of Him. With that intention he made a retreat before making his First Communion, and during the retreat he made a general confession of his whole life. If you had seen the torrent of tears he shed, and the lively sorrow wherewith he was penetrated, you would have thought, my very dear friends, that there was no greater sinner on earth. Yet he had never stained with mortal sin the fair robe of his innocence. But whence, then, came his grief and his tears? Ah! it was that the grace with which he was enlightened made him regard the least faults as so many odious monsters, and he could not console himself for having offended a God who deigned to become his food. It was in these sentiments that he passed the time of his retreat. The happy moment for which he had so long sighed came at last: he had the happiness of receiving his God! It would be impossible to express the lively sentiments of piety with which he was animated during that holy action.

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It was nothing but sighs, tears, transports of love and gratitude: "O my God!" he exclaimed, "since Thou hast had the goodness to give Thyself to me, I will give myself entirely to Thee; since Thou art united so closely to me, nothing will ever be able, henceforth, to separate me from Thee. I would be the most ungrateful of children, if I reserved anything from a God so good and who has loved me so much." Nor was this a passing fervor, which vanished with the occasion that gave it birth. Albini never forgot that happy day, nor the engagements he had contracted with God. The Communion was for him a salutary food, which made him grow sensibly in virtue and in piety. Do the same thing, happy children, who are preparing for your First Communion, and you will make it well.—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 370.

582. *The First Communion of a Prince.*—Amongst the children who may be proposed to you as models, dear friends, I will select one to-day from the highest rank, because it will, I am sure, make more impression upon you. When the illustrious Fenelon,—who had been charged by Louis XIV. with the education of the Duke of Burgundy, his grandson,—felt certain that he was sufficiently instructed to approach the sacraments with all the faith and piety which the Church requires, he had him make his First Communion. Here is the touching discourse which he addressed to him on this occasion: "Behold, my lord, the long-expected day is at length arrived, the day which

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is to influence all the others of your life, even till your death. Your Saviour comes to you under the appearance of the most familiar food, in order to nourish your soul, even as the material blood daily nourishes your body. It will only appear to you as a particle of common bread, but the virtue of God is hidden therein, and your faith will not fail to recognize Him. Say to Him with Isaiah: 'O my God! Thou art truly a hidden God!' In truth, my lord, He is hidden there through love for us; He veils His glory that our eyes may not be dazzled by it, and that we may approach Him more familiarly. It is there that you will find the hidden manna, with the divers tastes of all the heavenly virtues; you will eat the bread which is above all substance. It is not He that will change into you, vile mortal, but it is you that will be changed into Him, to be a living member of the Lord. May faith and charity make you taste the gift of God!" This pious ceremony, which took place in the chapel of the palace of Versailles, was an object of edification to the whole court; the Duke of Burgundy retained the impression of a piety so sincere and so profound, as the chronicles of that time relate, that he received Holy Communion every fortnight, with a humility and recollection that impressed every one. Once more, dearly beloved children, let us imitate such faithful models.—Guillois, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 371.

583. *A Young Communicant's Request to Her Father.*—If you have any favor to ask of your parents,

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dear children, the day of your First Communion will be well chosen for that. The day that a young lady of Paris, named Emilie Le Camus, made her First Communion, a poor widow, who knew her piety and charity, came to tell her, in the most affecting way, of the deplorable situation to which she was reduced. She painted, in the liveliest colors, the misery she endured when her children held out their hands to her for the bread she had not to give them. "Ah! Miss," cried this poor woman, "this Sunday is such a happy day for you! Can you refuse to make us sharers in your happiness? Will you be less liberal to us than Our Lord has been to you?" These last words made a deep impression on the mind of Mademoiselle Le Camus; she felt her heart softened, and, after some moments' reflection, she said to the unfortunate widow: "I can do nothing for you now; but, wait for me, I will soon return, and perhaps I may then be able to give you some relief." So saying, Emilie hastened to her father who was very fond of her, and throwing herself suddenly into his arms: "O Father!" she cried in her most persuasive accents, "you have never ceased to give me proofs of your affection; but now you must grant me a still greater favor, one that will increase my happiness very much." "What do you wish for, my daughter?—Explain yourself, without fear."—"I dare not tell you."—"Be not afraid, my child! remember you speak to the fondest of fathers, who can refuse you nothing. What do you want? Explain yourself, I say again!"

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"I want—I want you to do it immediately."—"What?"—"To give me a hundred crowns a year out of the fortune you have to give me some day."—"A hundred crowns a year! And that, you say, would make you quite, quite happy? Well! I cannot refuse you so small a favor. But what induces you to ask it now of me? You want for nothing; all that is mine is yours, and all we have has hitherto been common to us all; why begin now to wish for something separate?"—"I have a reason for it, my dear father, which I cannot tell you just now, but I know you will be satisfied with it when you hear what it is. Do not refuse me the favor I ask of you; I beseech you by the love you have for me, by that I shall always have for you, and if that will not be sufficient, I beseech you by the tears you see me shed." And the tears burst from her eyes. The father, much affected, promised to do what she wished. She no sooner heard his promise than, intoxicated with joy, she flew to the room where she had left the poor woman; she seized her by the hand, and drew her to her father's apartment. Then, throwing her arms round the poor woman's neck, and embracing her with transport: "Every year I shall have a hundred crowns all to myself," cried she; "my dear, kind father, whom you see here, has just promised it to me; well, my poor woman, they are yours, and your children's." The father then understood the mystery with which she had covered her request; he understood that it was charity alone

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which had inspired it, and as he was himself very charitable, he warmly approved of the good action his daughter had just done, expressed the satisfaction he felt, and exhorted her to preserve, all her life, the tender compassion she had shown for the unhappy the day of her First Communion. The unfortunate widow who was its object felt it still more sensibly; she could never speak of Miss Emilie without enthusiasm; she published everywhere the extraordinary benefit she had received from her, and the touching example of her new benefactor soon procured her many others.—Guillois, 372.

584. *The Happiest Day of My Life.*—The anecdote that touches me most in the life of the great Napoleon, my good friends, is this: That illustrious emperor, so long the favorite of fortune and the child of glory, never forgot his catechism; but, above all, he never forgot the happy day of his First Communion; he had made it in 1782, at the school of Brienne, then situate in the diocese of Langres, and now in the department of the Aube. He often said that that First Communion had left him the idea of perfect happiness. He was one day in his tent receiving congratulations for a victory he had just obtained; one of the Marshals of the Empire said to him: "Sire, I am sure this is the happiest day of your life!" Napoleon quickly replied: "*No, sir.*" This short, dry answer was followed by a dead silence; then each one tried to name the day that best deserved that qualification. They recalled the battle of

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Montenotte, the day of the 18th Brumaire, the victory of Marengo, the day of his consecration and coronation, the sun of Austerlitz, the birth of his son, the King of Rome. "*No, gentlemen!*" was still Napoleon's answer. There was silence again, and some surprise was manifested, when Napoleon, grave, collected, and much moved, let fall these words: "*The happiest day of my life, gentlemen, was the day of my First Communion!*" Casting a keen glance round the assembly, he saw nothing but surprise; but he saw a tear shining in the eyes of one of the officers present; he approached him, and pressing his hand affectionately: "*You un lerstand me*," said he. That officer, my dear friends, was Count Drouot, General of Artillery, the son of a common baker, a pupil of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Nancy before the revolution. He himself practised his religion in the camp with the regularity of a primitive Christian. That brave general, who died in 1847, did not wish that this touching anecdote should be lost to posterity; it was he himself who related it to the Bishop of Nancy, who afterwards became Archbishop of Bordeaux.—*Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. LXIV., p. 9.

585. *A Dying Man's First Communion.*—The traitor Judas, my very dear friends, had made a sacrilegious First Communion; he only did that, and yet it sufficed to draw down upon his head the whole weight of the Divine vengeance and malediction, both in this life and the other. Oh! but a First Communion badly made is something terrible, something

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frightful. Listen to what I am going to tell you. In a town on the banks of the Rhine, in Germany, a man who had shown all his life very unchristian sentiments, and had given himself up to every passion, was struck with the disease of which he died. His family who, happily, resembled him but little, seeing him in such danger, sent for a priest. The sick man says nothing, even appears glad, and confesses with dispositions seemingly sufficient. Some time after, the priest who had prepared him brings the holy Viaticum, and prepares to administer it to him. He had the holy Host already in his fingers, and was going to place it on the tongue of the dying man, when the latter, pushing away his arm, cried in a voice that made every one tremble: "Stop, Father, stop! I made my First Communion in a sacrilegious manner. I have made no others since, and I will not have two on my conscience; one is surely enough to suffer for in hell for all eternity!" At these words all present were seized with inexpressible fear and horror. As for the dying man, he struggled for some hours in the convulsions of despair, and expired foaming with rage; he was about forty-seven years old.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 94.

586. *An Honest Man has but his Word.*—Dear children, you are all-powerful with your fathers and mothers on the day of your First Communion. I remember how well this was turned to account by a girl twelve years and a half old. Having passed her catechismal examination successfully, she was finally

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received. She announced this good news to her father, and added, overwhelmed with joy: "Papa, the good God has done me a great favor, and I hope you will grant me one, too." "I will," answered the father, "what do you ask?" "I will not tell you till you have promised to grant it." "That cannot be, my dear Rosalie, I must know if the thing is in my power." "Oh! yes, you can do it; it depends only on yourself." "First tell me, then, what it is." "No, I will not tell you till you have promised me," and she redoubled her caresses and tender entreaties. The father gave in at last, and made the required promise. "Well," said the daughter, "you must complete my happiness by sharing it with me; it is a long time since you were at Communion; you may die at any moment, and you would not be ready to appear before God; so, profit by this opportunity." "I will see about that," replied the father; "it takes time, you know, and reflection." "Oh! papa, you promised me, and an honest man has but his word. I am resolved to torment you till you consent." Victory! victory! My friends, some weeks after, people were edified to see the father seated at the Sacred Banquet, beside his beloved daughter, and I confess it was hard to say which of the two seemed the happiest.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 97.

587. *The Pennies of a Young Communicant.*—The First Communion is so important, my very dear children, that you should take several years to think of it and prepare for it. Imitate in that the little

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George, about whom I am going to tell you. This dear child belonged to a family of poor working-people, in the little town of St. Dizier, if I am not mistaken. Every day his mother, sending him to the Brothers' School, gave him a piece of bread and a penny to buy something that he might eat with it. The poor child contented himself with his piece of bread, and hid away his penny every morning in the bottom of an old press. One day his mother discovered the little treasure; not knowing whence the money came, fearing even that it might have been stolen, she asks her son where all the pennies came from, and what he meant to do with them. "Mamma," he answers, a little embarrassed, "they are the pennies you gave me every morning; I put them away to give to the poor when I make my First Communion." Touching inspiration: this little angel wished that the poor should take part in his happiness, and that it might be a festival on earth, as well as in heaven, the day on which his heart should be for the first time united to God. His good mother understood that, she pressed him to her heart, and shed tears of joy over him.—*Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. LXIII., p. 45.

588. *How a New Communicant Reasoned.*—It is not enough, dear friends, to prepare well for First Communion; it is not even enough to make it well; it is necessary to persevere after having made it. I was told in Paris that a good little boy, named Anatole, the son of working people as honest as people

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can be when they have no religion, had made his First Communion with admirable fervor. The Sunday following, the child rises very early, puts on his best clothes, and prepares to go out, "Why, where are you going so early?" asks his father. "Father, I am going to Mass; you know what the commandment says: *Sundays and holydays Mass thou shalt hear.* After the great favor God has bestowed on me, could I show myself ungrateful towards Him?"—"Bah! that is all nonsense; work or go to walk, but leave the priests to sing their *Oremus* alone. God never made such a law as that."—"But," said the child, his cheeks flushing with the warmth of his feelings, "if that law is all nonsense, that other, *Honor your father and your mother*, must be nonsense, too!" Which of the two was most disconcerted? Evidently it was the poor ignorant workman; he could make no answer, turned away in thoughtful mood, perhaps even admiring in the depth of his heart his son's presence of mind and good sense. The fact is, my dear friends, that eight days after, the child did not go to Mass alone; his father and mother accompanied him, and ever after they became excellent Christians.—*Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. LXXVIII., p. 7.

589. *Can Mass be Heard in a Workshop?*—Happy the children who are animated by a good spirit, and who surmount with courage the obstacles they meet in the accomplishment of their duties! Here is one instance of a working boy docile, laborious, and en-

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dowed with a generous soul. His family, not knowing, and consequently not practising his religion, had, nevertheless, sent him to the Brothers, and the child had always been a consolation to them by reason of his piety and his assiduity to study. After his First Communion his parents thought of binding him apprentice to a man who neither kept Sunday nor holyday. Edward, considering how painful it would be to him not to be able to obey God, whose will it is that the holy day of Sunday should be employed in his service, was on the point of resisting; but, having first recommended himself to God, he went to his confessor, and told him his trouble. The minister of the Lord, a wise and prudent man, ordered him to obey, and submit to the paternal authority. "Content yourselves," said he, "with offering to God your labor, and, during the Holy Sacrifice, collect yourself interiorly, and unite yourself with the prayers of the priest and of the faithful; the good God will come to your assistance." The boy, soothed and encouraged, commenced his apprenticeship, and was constantly docile to the lessons he had received at school, and the counsels of his director. At his work in the shop, amongst the workmen, he was always gay, smiling, and amiable. He went about his work in such a willing, cheerful way, that he pleased every one, but especially his patron, and kept continually humming some pious airs, or singing snatches of hymns. But there was a day and a time when he always appeared graver and more collected; the day was Sun-

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day, and the time, while the Holy Sacrifice was being offered up. His master at last perceived it, and failed not to question him on the cause of this silence, and the thoughtful air he showed on Sunday, and always at the same time. The young apprentice simply told him that being deprived of hearing Mass, he united himself in spirit with those who had the happiness of complying with that Christian duty. The master, far from being annoyed at this avowal which condemned himself, admired the virtue of his apprentice; and as he was perfectly satisfied with his good conduct and his work: "My boy," said he, "I am pleased with you; I wish to reward you and give you pleasure; for that reason, I will allow you to stay away every Sunday from next Sunday out; discharge your Christian duties and you will always be a good lad." The pious child thanked his master, and thenceforward was able to satisfy his devotion by assisting regularly at the offices of the Church, and participating in the Sacraments. So he became a finished workman, blessed by God, loved, respected by his fellow-workmen, who never found fault with what he did, because he was ever amiable and obliging to every one.—*Recomp. Hebdom*, No. XLVIII., p. 5.

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CHAPTER X.

PENANCE.

I.—ON PENANCE IN GENERAL.

590. *The Boxing Mania.*—We must do penance for our sins, my friends; but our having so simple and so easy a means of obtaining pardon is not a motive to encourage us to commit them more at our ease. There was in Rome, at the time it was still pagan, a libertine of a singular kind; he was called Lucius Neratus, and his greatest pleasure was, when he met poor decent people in the street, if they seemed at all helpless, to give them a blow on either cheek. This silly ruffian paid dear for his strange mania, for the law of the Twelve Tables decreed a heavy fine for such offences. But this did not frighten Neratus; on the contrary, for greater convenience, he had a slave to follow him with a purse of silver. As often as he had yielded to this strange fancy, by striking people in the face, he caused the sum fixed by law to be counted out to the injured person, in order to prevent any complaint being lodged against him. He imagined that that was all he had to do, and that he need not give himself any further trouble; he was

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mistaken. As soon as the judges were made aware of this vile speculation, they abolished the ancient law and established a new one, whereby every personal offence was to be punished according to the gravity of the injury and the quality of the person offended. Well! my friends, what instruction do you draw from this curious story? Here it is: Impenitent sinners are like Neratus; they fancy it is sufficient for them to confess their sins and perform the penance imposed on them, and that nothing more is to be done. But when the Lord sees that the graces and means of salvation He sends us are abused, He, too, in some sort, changes His law; He permits that those who have had a presumptuous confidence in His divine mercy, and who encouraged themselves in evil by the facility of repairing it, see accomplished in their regard that sentence of Jesus Christ himself: "Some sins are not forgiven in this world or the next."—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 177.

591. *The Penance of Three Actors.*—"Unless ye do penance, ye shall all perish," is said in Scripture; and, dear friends, those words well meditated upon have made great sinners great saints. There was at Tarsus, in Cilicia, a comedian, named Babylas, and two others, females, named Cometa and Nicosa, who led a very scandalous life. They were as yet all pagans. Babylas, passing one day by where there was an assembly of Christians, curiosity induced him to enter, and listen to an instruction that was being given. The text was precisely those words of St.

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John the Baptist: *Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand.* The words of the preacher went straight to the heart of Babylas; he was touched, and resolved thenceforth to do penance. Arrived at home, he said to Cometa and Nicosa, his two accomplices, that he gave up the theatre for evermore, to occupy himself solely with the salvation of his soul. He left them his fortune to divide between them. But behold, dear friends, the power of good example: this proposal touched the two women; they began to weep bitterly and addressed him in these words: "What! you have guided us to our ruin, and now that you are going to eternal life, you would leave us alone, you would abandon us to our hard fate. No, it shall not be; we have imitated you in your criminal life, we will also follow you in the way of penance that you embrace." And they carried out their resolution. Babylas, to lead a solitary and penitential life, retired into a tower of the city ramparts, and the two others shut themselves up in a miserable cave, where they passed the rest of their days in retreat, and in the exercise of an austere and penitential life. It was thus that these poor sinners became holy penitents.—Schmid et Belet, II., 568.

592. *An Emperor in Public Penance.*—I know not, in all ecclesiastical history, a penance more striking than that of Theodosius the Great. I am going to tell it to you somewhat abridged. That prince, having heard that the inhabitants of Thessalonica had revolted against his officers, and ignored his author-

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ity for a short space, had them massacred without any form of trial. Seven thousand persons were killed in that horrible carnage. St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, hearing this tragical news, wrote a beautiful letter to the Emperor: "I have had a dream by night," said he, "and I thought I saw you coming to church, but I was not permitted to offer the Sacrifice." That holy bishop took this vision for a sign that God willed the Emperor to be deprived for a time of assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. St. Ambrose continued exhorting Theodosius to do penance for his crime. On reading this letter the Emperor felt himself touched with repentance, and, on his returning to Milan, as he presented himself at the church, the holy bishop, who awaited him at the door, refused him admission with a firmness truly episcopal. "Retire," said he, "and add not a new crime to those you have already committed." Theodosius excused himself by the example of David who had made himself guilty of murder. Ambrose replied: "Since you have imitated him in his sin, imitate him in his penance." The Emperor, unable to reply, retired submissively to his palace with tears in his eyes; he abstained from going to church for eight whole months, living as a penitent unworthy to participate in the Holy Mysteries with the faithful, and he willingly submitted to the public penance. He began by leaving off the imperial robes, with which he would not clothe himself again during the course of his penance; he laid them on the ground,

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and wept publicly the sin he had committed, rather through passion and surprise than through malice. Sozomenes, an ecclesiastical historian, even says that the Emperor publicly confessed his fault in the church. He there assisted at the common prayers in the most humble posture, not standing or kneeling, like the others, but prostrate on the ground, saying with the penitent king: "My soul hath cleaved to the pavement: quicken Thou me according to Thy word." Then he tore his hair, struck his forehead and breast, asked pardon of God with tears and groans, thereby giving sensible marks of a heart broken with grief. He even repaired the evil he had done, as far as possible, by a law suspending executions for thirty days after the sentence was passed. Thus it was that an emperor was not ashamed to do a penance which private individuals would not have dared to undertake; and there was no day during his after life in which the remembrance of his sin was not present to his mind. Finally, at the end of eight months, St. Ambrose received him at the door of the cathedral of Milan, permitted him to assist at the Holy Sacrifice, and publicly gave him Holy Communion.—D. Genevaux, *Hist. Chois.*, 283.

593. *I am no longer such a one. . . . .*—When we have confessed our sins, done penance for them, and received absolution, there is still something more to be done, my very dear children! it is to correct ourselves. Accordingly, after a sincere conversion, we ought to be no longer the same; those who had been

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dissipated, volatile, idle, given to lying, ought to become serious, wise, laborious and truthful. St. Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan, who lived in the fourth century, relates a somewhat curious fact in this connection. A young man, of Alexandria, I think, had had the misfortune to commit a great crime with a person of his own country. Ashamed of having given way to the temptation, and fearing to fall again if he remained at home, he undertook a long journey. I believe he came as far as Rome, went to confession there, and submitted to the severe penance imposed upon him. At last, when several years had passed, he returned to his own country, resolved to persevere in the good dispositions he then had. Passing along the streets of Alexandria to go to the house of his parents, he was accosted by his former companion in guilt. She approaches and bids him good day. Our young pilgrim regards her with an astonished air, as though he did not recognize her. "Why?" said she, "do you not know me? I am *such-a-one*."—"That may be," said the young man, "but, as for me, I am no longer *such-a-one*." And he continued his way without saying a word more. There is precisely, dear friends, what we ought to say and do after our conversion; we should no longer be able to recognize ourselves.—NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, II., 41.

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II.—ON CONTRITION.

594. *Imperfect Contrition of Antiochus.*—The Holy Scripture furnishes us, my very dear friends, with a remarkable example of defective contrition, in the person of Antiochus Epiphanius, King of Syria. Enraged to see that Judas Maccabeus had so utterly defeated his armies, he quitted Persia, where he then was, and would put himself at the head of new troops. He advanced then towards Judea, and swore to make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, and to bury all the Jews beneath it. But God watched over his people; as Antiochus was pursuing his journey with extraordinary rapidity, he fell from his chariot and bruised his whole body. That haughty prince, who fancied that he could command the very waves of the sea, felt that the hand of God had struck him. In fact, his wounds all festered and putrified; his entrails were torn with excruciating pains; disgusting worms came forth from every part of his body, which had become, as it were, a mass of corruption. It was then that the impious prince began to repent of what he had done and projected against the people of God; he even allowed these words to escape him: "I see it is just to submit to God, and mortal man may not strive against Him who is immortal." He not only promised not to treat Judea as he had intended, but, on the contrary, to treat it as one of his most favored provinces, and even to furnish from his treasury the silver necessary for the sacrifices of the temple. He

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at length went so far as to promise that he would have himself instructed in the Jewish religion, and practise it with zeal and fidelity. All was of no avail; Antiochus died miserably before reaching the end of his journey. "He asked mercy," says the Scripture, "but he was not to obtain mercy." And why so? Ah! dear friends, it was because the contrition of Antiochus was not excited in him by supernatural motives. Observe that in all that he was only occupied with himself; he repents of his crimes because of the chastisements they drew down upon him; he proposes to do better for the future, but only in the hope of being cured. His contrition was defective; it was not such as to deserve pardon.—I. *Maccabees*, Chap. VI.

595. *The Contrition and Penance of Ustazade the Apostate.*—I cannot better make you acquainted with the fruits of a good confession than by the story I am going to relate. In the fourth century, Sapor, king of the Persians, having become a persecutor of the Christians, ordered that every priest in his dominions that would not renounce Jesus Christ should be beheaded. He sent for the Archbishop of Seleucia, St. Simeon, who had chief charge of the flock, and passed for the most zealous defender of Christianity. The king exhorted him to adore the Sun, making him the most magnificent promises if he obeyed, and threatening, in case of refusal, to put him to death and expel all the Christians from the kingdom. Simeon answered firmly: "I cannot adore the Sun, I should

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betray my religion." The prince, irritated, caused him to be put in prison, in the hope that the bad treatment he received there might, perhaps, induce him to change his mind. As they were conducting him thither, an old officer, named Ustazade, who was steward of the imperial palace, was deeply touched to see the holy bishop in that state. He prostrated himself before him through respect; but the Saint appeared offended by this testimony of respectful attachment, and he turned away his face so as not to see Ustazade. And wherefore? Ah! it was that this officer had been formerly a Christian, and through weakness or cowardice had apostatized by worshipping the Sun, and thereby renouncing Christianity. Ustazade understood St. Simeon's conduct; but he could not bear this reproach, which he had so well deserved, and he instantly burst into tears. To repair the crime of his apostacy, he threw off the white robe he wore and put on a black one, in order to manifest his repentance. Thus attired, he went and placed himself before the palace, and there, pouring forth tears and lamentations, he exclaimed: "Wretch that I am! What have I to expect from Jesus Christ, whom I have had the misfortune to renounce, if I am so sensible to the contempt, which Simeon, who is only His minister, shows for me because of my apostacy?" The king, hearing that his faithful eunuch was deeply afflicted, wanted to know the reason; he sent for him into the palace. "What disgrace has befallen you?" he said to him in a tone

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of the greatest mildness. "Alas! I would rather that every disgrace possible had burst upon me, rather than that which is the cause of my grief! I weep that I am not dead, that I can still see that Sun which I have had the misfortune of adoring sooner than displease you. I deserve a double death, one for having betrayed Jesus Christ, my Adorable Saviour; the other, for having deceived you." Ustazade then swore that he would never betray Him whom he recognized and adored as his God. At these words Sapor became furious, and swore to put all the Christians to death; yet through compassion for this old man, he neglected nothing to gain him over. "No," said this true penitent, "you shall not succeed; I will never be foolish enough to render to the creature the supreme worship which is due only to the Creator." The king, seeing his constancy, sentenced him to be beheaded. As he was led to execution, Ustazade sent for another officer of the palace, who was his friend, and besought him to go to Sapor and ask a favor for him. "Prince, in return for the fidelity with which he has served you for so many years, Ustazade prays you to grant that at the time when his sentence of death is being executed, a herald may proclaim that he was not so condemned in punishment of any crime, but only because he is a Christian, and refuses to betray his God." Sapor consented with pleasure to his steward's demand; he hoped thereby to intimidate the other Christians, when they saw that he did not even spare an old

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man who had served him long and well. There, dear friends, is what may be called a sincere contrition, accompanied by a firm purpose.—LASSAUSSE, *Explic. du Cat. de l'Empire*, 572.

596. *Penance Imposed on a Truly Contrite Sinner.*—It is related that a great sinner went to confession to the venerable Pierre de Corbeil, Archbishop of Sens, who lived, I think, in the fifteenth century. He made a sincere confession of all the crimes he had committed, and he did so sighing and weeping, asking with humility if God would really forgive him his sins. The prelate answered him: "Doubt it not, my son, provided you are sincerely resolved to do penance." "What?" cried this contrite and humble sinner, "will God, whom I have so grievously offended, be satisfied with that? Ah! impose on me whatever you will, I am ready to do it! But how can you ever impose a penance upon me long enough, severe enough, to equal the heinousness of my crimes?" The holy prelate, himself shedding tears of compassion and of joy on meeting a sinner so well disposed, said to him: "Your penance shall be only for seven years." "Father!" cried the sinner, "my penance only for seven years! What! so small a thing for such great crimes, which I could not expiate in the whole course of the longest life!" "It shall be less still, my dear child," said the Archbishop, more and more softened, "for I oblige you only to fast three days on bread and water." "Ah! Father," cried the penitent, striking his breast very hard, "do not destroy me, I

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beseech you; I am at your feet, and I implore a mercy which I cannot too dearly purchase. Proportion, as far as possible, my penance to my iniquity, spare not my weakness; I am ready to do and undertake all, to obtain a pardon of which I am unworthy." The venerable confessor, inspired by God, and filled with admiration for the workings of grace, then told him: "Be of good heart, my son, I order you only to say the Lord's Prayer once, and I have every reason to believe that all your sins shall be forgiven you." At these words the penitent, whose heart was broken with grief, utters a loud cry, expressing at once his astonishment and his gratitude towards the God of mercy, and immediately he falls at the feet of the holy Archbishop, expiring thus with grief for having offended God, and going, perhaps, to heaven without even passing through the flames of purgatory. Magnificent example of perfect contrition!—Guillois, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 390.

597. *Method of Exciting Oneself to Contrition.*—Contrition is so indispensable, dear friends, that we should neglect nothing to excite ourselves to it. Here is an excellent method to succeed therein. Mgr. de la Mothe d'Orleans, Bishop of Amiens, confessed every eight days. In his preparation for confession he made three stations: the first in hell, the second in heaven, the third on Calvary. He first descended in thought into the place of torments, and saw there the spot he believed he had merited in the midst of devouring and everlasting flames, in company with

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devils and damned souls. He thanked the Lord for not having cast him into it, and besought him to still have mercy on him, granting him the graces necessary to preserve him from it. He then ascended to the regions of glory, amid the blessed. There, he groaned in spirit over the sins whereby he had closed its gates against him; he beseeched the Lord to open them, and fervently invoked the Saints. He then went up in thought to Calvary, and considering attentively and lovingly his crucified Saviour, he said to himself: "And there is my work! I am the cause of the pains and sorrows Jesus Christ endured; I helped, by my sins, to cover with wounds the body of a Man-God, to crucify Him, to put Him to death! O Jesus! what harm hast Thou done me? How could I treat Thee so, Thou who lovedst me to excess, Thou whom I ought to love with an infinite love, if I could love Thee infinitely? It is because Thou art infinitely amiable that I love Thee, and repent of having offended Thee." You will admit, dear friends, that this method would be quite proper to produce good sentiments in our soul at the moment of confession.—Guillois, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 383.

598. *Mercy for Every Sin.*—However numerous our sins may be, children, it is not they that will destroy us, but the want of contrition and confidence in God. Would you have a proof of this? Listen: A woman who was a great sinner, crossing a church one day to shorten her way, saw a great number of persons crowding in, and appearing to expect some-

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thing extraordinary. Curious to know what was going on, she takes her place with the others; and, the crowd increasing, she soon found herself so surrounded that it was impossible to think of retiring. Some time after, a venerable missionary ascended the pulpit, and preached on the goodness of God to sinners. Amongst others, he several times repeated these words: "My brethren, there is mercy for every sin, provided the sinner repents." This woman, who had heard all very attentively, fixed her mind particularly on these words, which had struck her. As soon as the discourse was finished, she made her way through the crowd, and, approaching the preacher just as he went down from the pulpit, she pulled him by the sleeve, and said with simplicity: "Is it really true, father, that there is mercy for every sin?"—"Nothing is more certain, madam! God forgives all sinners if they only repent."—"But," said the woman again, "there are all sorts of sinners; does God forgive all without distinction?"—"Yes, certainly; provided they detest their sins, God forgives them all without distinction."—"Would He pardon me who for fifteen years have committed the greatest crimes?" "Undoubtedly," answered the missionary, "He will pardon your sins if you only detest, and cease to commit them."—"If that be so, father, I pray you tell me at what hour you will hear my confession."—"I can hear you immediately, madam; prepare yourself, and I will be back in a moment." The missionary points out his confessional, and returns some time

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after to hear her. Before retiring, she said to her confessor: "Father, I cannot return to my dwelling without exposing myself to the danger of falling again into sin; could you not procure me a shelter for the night?" The missionary having explained to her that he could not do it without great difficulty, this woman generously resolved to remain in the church all night. Next morning, when the doors were opened, she was found lifeless in a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin; she was kneeling, with her face prostrate on the ground, and the pavement was seen wet with the tears she had shed; she had wept her sins so bitterly that she had died of grief. The missionary being apprised of what had happened, went to the place, recognized her for the person whose confession he had heard on the previous night, and admired the greatness of God's mercy. The circumstance furnished him with a theme for a fine and useful discourse; let it be for us, dear friends, an additional motive to excite ourselves to contrition for our faults, and never to lose confidence. —Noel, *Cat. de Rodez*, III., 237.

599. *The Fears of a Servant.*—A servant, returning from catechism, was questioned by his master, who was a good Christian, on what he had learned. "Alas! sir," said he sighing, "I have learned that I am damned." "And why so, Stephen?" asks his master. "Because, sir, the priest says that one must be sorrier for their sins than for the death of their father, and I know that I felt more sorrow when my

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father died than I ever did for my sins." The master told him that he must have misunderstood what was said. He explained to him the doctrine of the Church on the subject of contrition, saying: "You see, sorrow for sin is of a kind, of a nature very different from the sorrow one feels on losing their father. The first is a hatred and detestation of evil committed; the second is an effect of the natural tenderness which exists in the heart of children towards their parents. If you hate, detest sin, if you are resolved rather to die than commit it anew, if you have these sentiments in your heart, be sure you have the necessary sorrow, you have a true contrition." At these words the good servant began to breathe again; he sincerely thanked his master for having enlightened him, and explained his error to him, an error that might have ended by throwing him into despair. And yourselves, dear friends, try to penetrate yourselves with the conditions and marks of a true contrition, and excite yourselves thereto the best you can.—Guillois, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, p. 391.

600. *A Zouave Preparing a Comrade for Death.*—When one cannot confess, dear friends, they cannot obtain pardon of their sins, except by an act of perfect contrition. The military history of France contains fine examples of this. I am somewhat of the opinion of that Zouave who said to an army chaplain: "See, Father, the airs of the impious and unbelieving, it is good to live, but it is the devil to die." Well! it would be necessary then to ask pardon of God, to

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express to Him all one's regret; it would be necessary, in a word, to do what a French officer wrote in military style on the death of one of his friends. It was about the year 1840. He addresses the sister of the deceased and tells her: "Your brother had been grievously wounded. On reaching the ambulance, he told me he wanted a priest to hear his confession. I answered him (excuse the terms): 'My friend, you seem to mistake the age. We are no longer in the time of the Crusades, nor under the reign of St. Louis; we are under the reign of Bugeaud.'—'No matter,' said he, 'I was brought up a Christian, and I want to die a Christian.' I assure you I sent everywhere in search of a priest, but there was not one in the camp. Your brother appeared much afflicted, and his faith impressed me strongly. Then I said to him: 'My friend, God is good, He sees your good will. Express to Him your regret, ask His pardon, and I am sure He will forgive you.' He did so, and died in the most edifying manner. I give you all these particulars because I know you are devout, and they will give you pleasure." It is a little dry, as you see, dear friends, but it bears the pleasing stamp of sincerity, candor and faith. You see there is an occasion when perfect contrition is strictly necessary to obtain pardon of one's sins.—Mullois, *Mois de Marie de tout le Monde*, p. 65.

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III.—ON CONFESSION.

601. *Sudden Death of a Shepherd After Confession.*—The greatest misfortune that can befall a sinner on earth, my very dear friends, is to die suddenly. Hence it is that we should always make our confession as if it were to be the last of our life. It is related in the life of St. Louis, king of France, that God often gave him the grace of being able to penetrate the secret of hearts. One day, whilst passing through one of the provinces of his kingdom, I know not which, he came to a shepherd who was grazing his flock. He approaches him with his usual kindness, looks at him with interest, puts some questions to him, and at length says: "My son, I know the bad state of your conscience; it is three years since you made a sincere confession; I beg of you, if you value your soul, to delay no longer in returning to God; let me take you back to the fold of the Good Shepherd, for death is already at your door. God is willing to forgive you all your sins." The shepherd, all amazed, shuddered at these words; he made a strict examination of his conscience, and confessed his sins with sincere contrition, having earnestly besought the Lord to give him that grace. But behold, dear friends, what need he had to do so: three days after he died a sudden death, in the very field where he was feeding his flock.—Schmid et Belet, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 171.

602. *Story of St. John Nepomucene.*—Speaking of

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the secrecy of confession, I know a very beautiful story which I will tell you. The Empress Jane, a princess adorned with all virtues, had chosen for her director the learned St. John Nepomucene, Canon of Prague, in Bohemia. Wenceslaus, husband of the Empress, was so jealous that he put an evil construction on the most innocent actions of his pious spouse. He allowed these injurious suspicions to take such root in his mind that at last he came to believe her guilty. To make himself sure, one day when she had been to confession he went to the canon, her director, and questioned him to know whether his suspicions were well founded. The Saint told him that he could not tell him one way or the other, for that the seal of confession being inviolable, any knowledge acquired in confession was the same as if it were not. The Emperor, much annoyed, kept a gloomy silence. Some days after he caused the Saint to be brought before him, and by turns employed persuasions, promises, and caresses to induce him to reveal the Empress' confession; you may well suppose, dear friends, that all was in vain. Wenceslaus then treated him with the greatest inhumanity, but still with no better success; he could draw nothing from that virtuous priest. At last he threatened him with death if he did not do as he desired. "You may put me to death," answers St. John Nepomucene, "but you shall not make me speak." Wenceslaus, in a rage, orders him to be thrown into the river Moldau, which flowed beneath the walls of his palace.

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The holy martyr was speedily stifled under the water. Some pious persons carried off his body, and laid it in a tomb, where it wrought many miracles. This happened in the year 1388. On opening his tomb 336 years after, that is to say, on the 14th of April, 1719, his body was found fleshless, but his tongue was as fresh and as well preserved as though he were dead but a few hours. It is still kept with much respect in the Cathedral of Prague, where an observant traveller saw it fresh and whole in 1769.—FELLER, *Biog. Univ.*, V.

603. *Apparition of a Damned Soul.*—You are not ignorant, very dear friends, that a single grave sin, wilfully concealed in confession, can be pardoned neither in this world nor the other; we must absolutely reveal all the sins we can remember, if we would recover the grace of God. I have read some terrible instances of this; here is one that you will never forget A young person of eighteen, who lived in Florence, in Italy, had the misfortune to fall into temptation, and commit a great sin. No sooner had she done so than she found herself covered with confusion and torn with remorse. "Oh!" said she to herself, "how shall I have the courage to declare that sin to my confessor? What will he think of me? What will he say to me?" She went, nevertheless, to confession, but dared not confess that sin; she got absolution, and had the misfortune to receive Communion in that state. This horrible sacrilege increased still more her remorse and trouble; she

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was, as it were, in a hell, tormented day and night by the reproaches of her conscience, and by the well-founded fear of being lost forever. In the hope of quieting her conscience, she gave herself up to tears and groans, to continual prayer, to the most rigorous fasts, and the hardest privations, but all was in vain: the remembrance of her first crime and her sacrileges harrassed and pursued her incessantly. Her soul was, as it were, in an abyss of sorrow and bitterness. In the height of her interior anguish, a thought came into her mind to go into a convent and make a general confession, in which it would be easy for her to declare her sin. She did so, and commenced the confession she had proposed making; but, still enslaved by false shame, she related the hidden sin in such a garbled, confused way, that her confessor did not understand it, and yet she continued to receive Communion in that sad state. Her trouble became so great that life appeared insupportable to her. To relieve her heart, tormented as it was, she redoubled her prayers, mortifications and good works, to such an extent that the nuns of the convent took her for a saint, and elected her for their superior, in place of one who had been carried off by death. Become superior, this wretched hypocrite continued to lead outwardly a penitential and exemplary life, embittered still by the reproaches of her conscience. To moderate her horrible fears a little, she at length made a firm resolution to confess her sin in her last illness, which came sooner than she expected. Then

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she immediately undertook a general confession, with the good intention of confessing the sin she had always concealed; but shame restrained her more strongly than ever, and she did not accuse herself of it. She still consoled herself with the thought that she would declare it a few moments before her death. Alas! my dear friends, she had neither the time nor the power. The fever rose so high that she became delirious, and so died. Some days after, the religious of the monastery, being in prayer for the repose of the soul of this pretended saint, she appeared to them in a hideous form and told them: "My dear sisters, pray not for me, it is useless—I am damned!"—"How?" cried an old religious more dead than alive; "you are damned, after leading such a holy and penitential life! Is it possible?"—"Alas! yes, I am damned for having all my life concealed in confession a mortal sin which I committed at the age of eighteen years." Having said these frightful words, she disappeared, leaving behind her an intolerable stench, the visible sign of the sad state in which she was. This story, which is so well adapted to make us reflect, is related by St. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence, who wrote in the fifteenth century.—Abbé FAVRE, *le Ciel Ouvert* 45.

604. *A Peasant's General Confession.*—Nothing is so useful as a good general confession, my dear children: when it is well made, it makes us perfectly easy as to the state of our conscience. Some one came

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one day to ask St. Vincent de Paul to repair to Gannes, situate a short distance from Folleville, in the department of the Oise, which was then his usual place of abode. Vincent set out without delay, when he knew that he was wanted to prepare for death a worthy peasant dangerously ill. Whether through ignorance, or neglect, this poor man had his conscience loaded with several mortal sins, which a false shame had always prevented him from revealing; and yet, he flattered himself that he was to be saved all the same. The Saint having commenced to hear him, thought he could urge him to make a general confession. The sick man, encouraged by the mildness with which his new director treated him, made an effort, prepared himself carefully, and at length declared his secret miseries, which he had never had courage to reveal to any one. This sincerity, so necessary at the last moment, was followed by an inexpressible consolation. The penitent found himself unburdened of an enormous weight, which had for many years oppressed him. The most remarkable circumstance was that he passed from one extreme to the other, and during the three last days he yet lived, he repeated several times a sort of public confession of his faults, which he had always been ashamed to confess at the sacred tribunal. The Countess de Joigny, whose farmer he was, having gone to see him, according to her custom: "Ah! Madam," cried he, as soon as he perceived her, "I was damned, if I had not been induced to make a general confession, on ac-

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count of several great sins which I could never bring myself to confess. I am very grateful to Father Vincent, whom you kindly sent to prepare me." It was thus that, by a good general confession, he set his conscience in order, recovered the peace of his soul, and died in the best dispositions.—ABELLY, *Vie de Saint Vincent de Paul.*

605. *The Tribulations of a Fleming.*—Here is one of the most curious examples I know on confessions wherein people try to conceal some mortal sin. The story is rather long, but still I think it will not tire you. A rich Fleming, born in Belgium, had the misfortune to commit a grave fault. Recovered from the temporary infatuation of the shameful passion which had kept him in thrall, he became so confused that he preferred death and eternal damnation to the shame of confessing it. Nevertheless his conscience tormented him incessantly. One day, in passing through Anvers, he heard a preacher saying that one is not obliged to confess sins which they have forgotten. He then tried every means to bury his in oblivion. With that view, he gives himself up to the vehemence of his passion, he heaps sins on sins, thinking thereby to lose sight of the first and most shameful fault. You will easily understand that it was quite the contrary. This crime presented itself unceasingly to his mind. He went travelling through different countries of Europe, thinking to divert his mind from this harassing, ever-present thought. But the variety of objects which he saw could not alle-

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viate or lessen his torments; it was impossible for him to fly himself. He afterwards applied himself to the study of mathematics, and to linear drawing, fancying that he might find some diversion for his thoughts in the close attention required for those sciences. All was useless, and our Fleming still found himself with the accursed sin fresh in his mind. What is he to do? He hopes to be able to efface his crime by the most austere practices of penance, without being obliged to confess. He, accordingly, puts on haircloth, uses the discipline severely, gives himself up to fasting, pours abundant alms into the lap of the poor; but the wound in his soul became all the deeper, and festered the more, the more he did to close it. In his impotence to calm his remorse, he takes the frightful resolution of hanging himself, to put an end to his unhappy life, and gets into a carriage to go home, in order to execute, in his own house, the horrible purpose he had formed. God, who still watched over this unfortunate, ordained it so that he met on the way a religious of his acquaintance. After exchanging salutations, he offers the Father a seat in his carriage. They entered into conversation, and, amongst other things, chanced to speak of confession. This was putting the finger on the wound. So, applying to himself the monk's remarks, he asks him, with a troubled countenance, why he talks to him in that way. The Father answers that it is the custom in his Order to speak to every one of the affair of salvation, with or without

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occasion. "And for myself," added he laughing, "I willingly offer you my services."—"I thank you," answers our Fleming drily, "you are but losing your time talking so to a man who has no wish to confess. If you can assist me without confession, indeed, I will thankfully accept your offer." The monk then suspects the bad state of that soul, and makes up his mind to act with all possible circumspection. He speaks to the heart of the unfortunate man, who confesses to him that, as a last resource, he has made up his mind to hang himself because he can no longer bear the remorse of his conscience. "Nevertheless," he added, "I am ready, Father, to endure all, to suffer all, to get rid of my torment, provided I can be dispensed from confession." The monk promises to assist him effectually, provided he will follow his advice for only a few days. On arriving at his house, he persuades him to invite some of his friends to supper, and then exhorts him to pass the night quietly. Next morning, he presents him with certain points of meditation to excite strongly his confidence in the infinite mercy of God. The following day, he gives him an examination of conscience, advising him to note the sins he knew he had committed, not to confess them, but to make an act of contrition over each. That being done, the Father invites him to take a walk in a neighboring forest, and there he asks him if he has examined each article well. "Now, my friend," said he, in a careless way, "in order to enable you to get a more perfect know-

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ledge of yourself, I am going to read you some of the faults contained in my little book of examination; now listen!" He then takes the book, rapidly turns the pages, and reads from time to time some of the most enormous sins. All at once he falls on that which had caused his penitent such long and cutting remorse. "There it is!" cries the Fleming, "there it is, Father, that accursed fault which has occasioned all my misery!"—"How! it is only that, my friend!" said the Father surprised; "why my little book contains many more enormous, and I can absolve you, if you will, of a thousand others still greater. But now that you have confessed your first great sin, it will not cost you much to tell the others that may recur to your mind." At these words the unhappy sinner throws himself on his knees, freely opens his heart, and, after having been sufficiently excited to contrition by these touching reflections, he receives absolution. He experienced so much joy, that he often repeated to whoever would hear him: "Oh! from how much anguish has confession delivered me! O confession! what tranquillity, what joy you confer on the soul when well made!"—Abbé Favre, *le Ciel Ouvert*, 45.

606. *Confession Praised by a Protestant Physician.*—The celebrated physician Tissot was giving, at Lausanne, the assistance of his art to a young foreign lady, whose disease soon assumed an alarming character. Being made aware of her dangerous state, and tormented by the regret of leaving life so soon,

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she becomes violently agitated, and almost falls into despair. The physician judged that this new shock would shorten still more her term of life; he warned her, according to his custom, that there was no time to lose in administering the helps of religion. A Catholic priest is called in; the patient receives, as the only remaining good, the words of consolation that fall from his mouth. She becomes composed, occupies herself with God and her eternal interests, receives the last sacraments in an edifying manner, and, next morning, the physician found her in a state of peace and tranquillity that astonished him. He remarked that the fever had abated, and all the symptoms were changed for the better; very soon the disease disappeared. M. Tissot, Protestant though he was, loved to relate this anecdote; he even exclaimed with admiration: "Behold the power of confession amongst Catholics!"—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, p. 408.

607. *One Must Confess to Believe.*—Do you know, children, what is the reason there are so many unbelievers? It is simply because of the fear of confession. Any one who confesses well doubts nothing in religion. A lieutenant-general, full of esteem for an officer, who was as distinguished for his piety as for his talents and his valor, had made him acquainted with his doubts in religion. The officer had urged him to obtain instruction on an object so important. Overcome by his solicitations, the lieutenant-general determines to confer, several times, with two eccle-

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siastics of great merit; but notwithstanding the solidity of their reasoning, he could not be convinced. His friend, the officer, making then a last effort, pressed him to apply to a virtuous priest, who was his ordinary confessor. The lieutenant-general goes to see him. "Reverend Father," said he, "I come to consult you on some doubts in regard to religion; I think it right to tell you that I have already conferred with Fathers So-and-So; but nothing came of it." "Sir," replies the minister of the Lord, "what could I tell you more than you have already heard from two such eminent priests? What arguments could I adduce more forcible than those they have employed to convince you? I have but one resource; deign to try it; go into my oratory, let us pray the Lord that He may enlighten your mind, that He may touch your heart, and begin by making your confession." "I, sir? why I hardly believe in God." "You believe in Him, sir, and in religion, too, more than you think. Kneel down, make the sign of the cross, I will repeat the *Confiteor* with you, and also question you." After many marks of astonishment, very natural under the circumstances, after many repetitions of his doubts, and even of his incredulity, after many difficulties and disputes, our lieutenant-general at last obeyed, and answers candidly the different questions put to him. The period of his first wanderings was ascertained; then some particulars of the subsequent irregularities were drawn out. Insensibly, the heart of that man opened, his voice began to change,

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some tears escaped from his eyes in spite of all he could do. The priest, perceiving his trouble, ceased his questions, and, giving himself up to all the ardor of his zeal, he exhorted him with feeling and fervor to repent, and the result was what might be expected. "O, Father!" at length said the penitent, in a voice choked with sobs, "you have taken the only means of reaching my heart. I am an unhappy man whom passion has led astray; I brought my judge to the depth of my conscience, I stifled its voice, and I chose rather to believe nothing than be forced to live well. To-morrow I will come back to you again, and continue my confession." He did so with sentiments of the liveliest compunction, and died some years after, in all the exercises of penance, and a truly Christian life.—DEBUSSI, *Nouveau Mois de Marie*, 143.

608. *A Veteran who Wanted to go to the Emperor.* —We like to see persons in high station giving themselves the example; that is why we take pleasure in telling you anecdotes of the Great Napoleon. An old soldier was going to die; he obstinately rejected the succors of religion, and had even repulsed two chaplains. The Abbé Larocque, who relates the fact, having been apprised by one of the Sisters of Charity, went to the patient's bedside, and began to chat with him in military fashion: "Well! comrade, how goes it?"—"It goes that I am going to Mont Parnasse," (one of the three great cemeteries of Paris.)—"Bah! and is the haversack ready? is the musket all

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right? are you fit to pass the good God's inspection?"—"See here now, father, don't speak like that; I have already made two others walk off. You are a brave man, and have served, so I wouldn't wish to give you any trouble."—"So you don't want to make your confession. Well! then, we'll say no more about it; let us talk of something else. Did you serve the Emperor?"—"Faith, I think I did, for I lost a leg in his service."—"Do you know what became of him?"—"He died in St. Helena."—"Do you know how to read?"—"No."—"So much the worse, for I was going to bring you a book in which you would see that the Emperor, before he died, received the last sacraments and went to confession."—"Ah, bah!"—"Would you be very glad to see the Emperor again?"—"Oh, yes, I'd willingly give my other leg to see him, and ten francs besides that I have in my purse."—"Well! comrade, if you want to see the Emperor again, there is question neither of leg nor money; you need only go to confession."—"I don't understand."—"If you wish to see the Emperor again, you must follow him the way he went. Where are you from?"—"From the neighborhood of Toulouse."—"Well! if the Emperor and you set out from Paris, he for Strasburg and you for Toulouse, would you meet on the way?"—"Ah! now, you're making game of me. How the d—l could I meet him? we'd be turning our backs on each other."—"Of course you would. Then, if you don't go to confession, you shall never see him again, for you

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won't follow the road he took."—"Let us see, now! what's that you're saying? Maybe it's only fudge." —"No, my friend, no."—"Well! hear my confession, that I may see the Emperor and the good God, too." The intention, it must be owned, was not the most perfect; but it was so easy to purify it. The old veteran with the wooden leg made a good confession, received the last sacraments, and could see the Emperor in the other world, with the certainty of leaving him no more.—*Recomp. Hebdom.*, LXXXVIII., 5.

IV.—ON SATISFACTION AND INDULGENCES.

609. *Story of Nicephorus and Sapricius.*—We must satisfy God and our neighbor for the injury done them; without that, dear friends, there is no pardon to be hoped for, even though all the other conditions were fulfilled. The most necessary and the most natural of all satisfactions is reconciliation with enemies. Hear on this subject one of the most terrible stories with which I am acquainted. There was in Antioch a Christian named Nicephorus, a layman, who was the particular friend of a priest named Sapricius. They lived together in perfect harmony; it was in the time of the Emperors Valerian and Gallian, in the third century. After having long maintained that marvellous and edifying friendship, it happened, by I know not what misfortune, that it relaxed, and they came to an open rupture. This enmity lasted a considerable time, but at length Nicephorus entered

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into himself, and, touched by what the Apostle St. John says, that he who hates his brother is a species of murderer, he addressed himself to the friends of Sapricius to bring about a reconciliation between them, but it was useless. He then went himself, and, throwing himself at the feet of Sapricius, besought him for the Lord's sake to pardon him; but that implacable man had the misfortune of listening too much to his resentment, and remained still inflexible. Valerian's persecution had been some time raging against the Christians; the priest Sapricius was taken by the persecutors, who addressed themselves to priests rather than lay people. He displayed a heroic courage and firmness in his answers, and in the cruel torture he was made to undergo. As he was found immoveable, he was sentenced to have his head cut off, and he was immediately led to execution. Nicephorus had no sooner heard of it than he ran to prostrate himself at his feet, calling him minister of Jesus Christ, and earnestly beseeching him to pardon him; but Sapricius did not even deign to answer him. Nicephorus ran by another street to meet him again before he left the city of Antioch; he begged his pardon with tears, and said all that his piety and humility could suggest. He followed him thus to the place of torture, so that the executioners, surprised at these importunities, said they had never seen such folly. "This man," said they, "is going to be executed in a moment, and you kill yourself asking his pardon." "You know

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not," answered Nicephorus, "what I ask of this confessor of Jesus Christ, but God knows it well." He still continued to solicit his pardon; but the heart of Sapricius was already hardened, and in such a deplorable disposition, he dared to ascend the scaffold where his sacrifice was to be offered, notwithstanding the prohibition made by Christ to present oneself at the altar without being reconciled to their brother. Wherefore it was that God soon made known that he rejected this sacrifice of a man who had the hatred of his neighbor in his heart; for, when Sapricius was on the scaffold, and the executioner told him to kneel down that he might cut off his head, the presence of death struck him with horror, he asked for pardon, and dared to say that he was willing to sacrifice to the gods, in conformity with the Emperor's edict. Nicephorus, touched with grief at this apostacy, declared that he was himself a Christian, and would not sacrifice to idols. The judge, being informed of it, condemned him to have his head cut off on the instant, which was executed. Thus it was that Nicephorus received the crown of martyrdom, whereof Sapricius had rendered himself unworthy, because he had obstinately refused to forgive his brother.—Godescard, *Vie des Saints, 9th Fevrier.*

610. *A Bishop Beaten with Rods.*—It is related that St. Paul abridged the penance which had been imposed on a Christian of Corinth, because he had remarked in him a sincere and lasting repentance of his crime. This, my friends, is what is called *indulgence.*

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The successors of the Apostles imitated the example of St. Paul, remitting to sinners a part of their penance, when they gave proof of much fervor and testified a lively repentance. The historian, Eusebius, relates that a bishop, named Natalis, had the misfortune of allowing himself to be seduced by two artful heretics, named Asclepiodotres and Theodotus. They had persuaded him to allow himself to be ordained bishop of their sect for a pension of one hundred and fifty Roman pennies, that is to say about a hundred and twenty francs of French money, which they were to pay him per month. But God, who is so good to His children, would not allow this poor bishop to perish outside the Church, he who had confessed the faith before tyrants and shared in the sufferings of the martyrs. He sent him several visions, to induce him to leave these heretics; but, at length, seeing that Natalis still resisted, because he was restrained by interest and by the vanity of seeing himself in the first place, he permitted that angels should show themselves visibly to him for a whole night, and that they should strike him with rods, just as was done to Heliodorus of old in the temple of Jerusalem. Next day Natalis clothed himself in sackcloth, covered his head with ashes, and shed a torrent of tears. He afterwards went to throw himself at the feet of Pope Zepherinus, and feared not, in his fervor, to prostrate himself, not only before the clergy, but also before the simple laity. The whole Church was touched by this act of humility. At length, after

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some time, by persevering in earnest supplication, especially after he had shown the marks of the blows he had received, Natalis obtained the favor of being re-admitted to Communion. Thus was abridged, by indulgence, the time he should have had to remain in public penance, according to the usage of the Church of that time.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 226.

611.—*The Restitution of a Plunderer.*—The twelfth century was witness, my dear friends, of one of the finest examples of conversion and restitution. A powerful lord, who lived in the neighborhood of Narbonne, in the department of the Aude, had committed many acts of depredation and pillage on all the adjoining villages. Suddenly the grace of God touched him, and Ponce de Lazare, as he was called, struck with fear of the judgments of God, resolved to do penance as publicly as his crimes had been committed. He, therefore, immediately changed his conduct. His former friends, who had been the unhappy promoters and accomplices of his evil deeds, went to him to express their astonishment. Thereupon he spoke to them in a tone so persuasive that he prevailed upon six of them to embrace the same kind of life as that which he proposed for himself. The first thing he did was to make restitution to every one from whom he had taken anything, restoring exactly the very things they claimed: wheat, fruits, flocks of sheep, cows, oxen, &c., &c. In this way, every one departed well content. When Ponce saw that no one

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asked him for anything more, he espied in the crowd a peasant who had claimed nothing: "And you, friend," said he, "why do you ask nothing?"—"Oh! as for me, my lord," replied the peasant, "very far from doing me any injury, you always protected me against my enemies; so you owe me nothing."—"You do not remember, then, having once lost a flock of sheep by night; well! it was I who had them taken away."—"I willingly give them to your lordship," replied the peasant, who scarcely remembered that loss, so long repaired. But Ponce, who wished to have nothing wherewith to reproach himself, obliged him to receive a flock equal in number and in value. After these works of satisfaction, this generous penitent distributed the rest of his wealth amongst the poor, and set out barefoot on a pilgrimage with his six companions; then he retired to a solitude, where he lived holily the rest of his days. He merited being placed by the Church amongst the number of the Saints, for she honors his memory on the 17th of June.—GODESCARD, *Vies des Saints.*

612. *The Alms of a King During the Jubilee.*—When the Church announces a jubilee, she usually prescribes five sorts of good works to do to gain it: Confession, Communion, fasting, visiting churches, and finally, alms proportioned to the means of each. I have somewhere read that the pious Charles II., King of Spain, being still very young, omitted nothing that was requisite to gain the jubilee of the year

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1675. One day, when making the prescribed stations on foot, he met on his way a poor man, who asked him for alms. Charles II. threw him a diamond cross which he wore on his breast, and no one noticed this extravagant liberality of the prince. When he was in church his officers perceived that he no longer had his royal cross; the idea immediately struck them that he had been robbed of it. The poor man who had received it, and who followed at a little distance, instantly cried: "There is the King's cross. His Majesty gave it to me." Charles admitted the fact. It was considered improper to leave the poor man this cross, because it made part of the crown jewels; but it was decided in council that, in whatever way the King made his gifts, they were to be held sacred. Consequently, the cross having been valued at about 36,000 francs, that sum was given to the poor man, who, as you may well think, went away blessing a prince so Christian and so generous.—FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*

613. *Contrition is Better than an Indulgence.*—A jubilee or a plenary indulgence is something very precious, dear friends; nevertheless, contrition for sin is better still, as the following example goes to prove. An officer of Pope Innocent XII., I think, was particularly esteemed and cherished by that pious Pontiff. He fell ill, and was soon in great danger of death. It was then that he showed how much he was filled with the liveliest sentiments of religion. Word was immediately brought to the

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Holy Father, who was much afflicted by the loss he was going to sustain, and, at the same time, much edified by the holy dispositions in which he was told this officer of his palace was. He sent one of the prelates of his court to visit him, charging him specially to give him a plenary indulgence of all his sins. The patient, who was a well-instructed man, and knew that, without contrition, indulgences, however precious they be, produce no effect in souls, answered this prelate: "My Lord, I pray you express to his Holiness my lively and sincere gratitude for his charity towards me; but my gratitude would be still greater if the Holy Father had the goodness to beg of God for me the grace of perfect contrition for my sins." The prelate returns to the Pope and tells him what had passed. Innocent XII., more and more edified, passed into his oratory and besought the Lord to grant the dying man the most perfect sentiments of contrition. Some hours after the officer breathed his last in the best possible dispositions.—LASSAUSSE, *Cat. de l'Empire*, 572.

614. *A Gold Ring Worn as a Penance.*—There is no alternative, my dear friends, we must make satisfaction for our sins in this world or in the other. Do not imitate him about whom I am going to tell you, who had great trouble in finding a penance that suited him. He was a man of noble rank, but unhappily a great sinner. At length, touched by grace, he felt some desire to be converted; but as he was too well known in France, he went to Rome, with the

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intention of making his confession to the Sovereign Pontiff himself. Pope Pius VI., I think it was, actually heard his confession, and was even edified by the exactness with which the penitent acquitted himself of that sacred duty, with the lively repentance and excellent dispositions he manifested; and yet when it came to the imposing of penance, the foreign nobleman would accept none of those which the Pope gave him. None was to his liking. He was too weak to fast, he said; he had not time to read or pray much; to retire into solitude to devote himself to pious meditations, or even to make a pilgrimage to some venerated shrine, all that, his occupations did not permit. To watch, to give himself the discipline, to lie on the ground, oh! his health would suffer too much. But, my friends, amongst all these obstacles, the greatest, although he did not acknowledge it was this: he fancied that such penitential practices did not suit a man of his condition. The Pope, in his wisdom, then gave him, for his whole penance, a gold ring, on which were engraved the Latin words *Memento Mori*, which means, "Remember that thou shalt die." He imposed it on him to wear this ring on his finger, and to read, at least once a day, the words engraved upon it. The nobleman went away, well pleased to have so light a penance. Nevertheless, it was soon to be followed by others much more serious. The daily sight of that ring penetrated him so with the thought of death, that he ceased not to say within himself: "Alas! since I am condemned to

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die, what have I to do here below except to prepare for a good death? What doth it profit me to spare my health which death will soon take from me altogether? What use is it to pamper my body and take such care of it since it is to rot in the ground?" When he had made these reflections for some time no penance appeared too painful to him. He thenceforward accepted all those that were imposed upon him, and persevered till death in those happy dispositions. Say, what would have become of him, dear friends, if he had not at length begun to understand his position?—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 188.

615.—*For the Little Sins of an African Chasseur.*—Nothing is so beautiful, children, as the religious sentiment, acting in concert with the bravery and frankness of a soldier; and France, you know, counts thousands of such men: the war in the East, and that of Italy, give us numberless proofs of this. Four or five years ago a venerable clergyman was crossing the Mediterranean in a steamboat. A poor blind man was sitting on the deck of the boat, silently munching a piece of dry bread; no one took any notice of him. He was all at once approached by an African chasseur going home on leave. "Old man," said he, "you seem to fare but poorly; here, take a share of the contents of my flask; it will do you good, and do me no harm." And the soldier sits down beside the poor man, and enlivens the meal by relating some incidents of his African campaign. Soon the passengers formed a circle round the two joyous messmates.

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The last drop of wine had been swallowed by the blind man, when the chasseur cries out: "That is not the end of it, old fellow! to-morrow I must moisten your dry bread for you again." And at the same time he unceremoniously takes off the blind man's dirty hat, and goes round the boat with it, even waking up those who were asleep, presenting his improvised begging-box to each, saying with an accent not easily imitated: *For a poor blind man!* When he came to the priest who relates the fact, the latter shook hands with him and said: "That is right, my worthy fellow!" "Ah! Reverend Father, it is for satisfaction for my little sins, for I gave the big ones to Father Parabère, who was our chaplain there below," and so saying he escaped into the admiring and astonished crowd, and went to pour into the blind man's capacious pocket the fruits of his collection.—*Recomp. Hebdom.*

616. *Help Me to Perform My Penance.*—The best of all penances, my friends, is to remove, as far as one can, the occasions that make us fall into sin. A man in Paris, who is still living, and, therefore, not to be named, was remarkable for his wealth and his learning, but he was a very bad Christian. He was the owner of a magnificent library, the contents of which, however, were not very edifying. His wife and daughter were much grieved at this, but they dared not say anything about it. All they could do was to leave in his way an interesting book entitled, I think, *The Messenger of Charity;* he read it, was

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touched, and even shed some tears. Ashamed, so to say, and even angry because he had been made to weep, he said testily to himself: "Bah! that is all very fine; paper refuses nothing. The author is not sincere." Thereupon he takes his hat and cane, and goes to the Abbé Mullois, author of that book, with the fixed intention of provoking him to anger, in order to make him contradict his own words. Happily the author remained calm, and the man of learning blustered away at pleasure. Still they parted good friends. The sincere and upright heart of this distinguished man had been struck; he returned some days after. He was much disturbed; it was plain that his soul was troubled, and that good and evil were there struggling for the mastery. Abbé Mullois, guessing what was going on, comes right to the point by proposing to him to go to confession. At these words the gentleman starts, and in great agitation takes some turns round the room. "I go to confession! what a thing to say to me!" And he strikes the table. "Go to confession! go to confession! and St. Bartholomew! and St. Dominick! and the Inquisition! and my library! and Voltaire's Works!" At last, as it were, tired out, he falls on his knees. The priest seizes the opportunity; he draws near, and the confession begins. After the lapse of a quarter of an hour, this careless sinner, who is now a generous Christian, rises from his knees, joy in his soul, and his eyes moist with tears. He cannot express his feelings except by a look and a warm shake-

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hands. On reaching home, he hastens to tell his wife and daughter what he had just done. They can scarce believe him. "Come!" said his wife, "do not jest on such a subject. If you were serious it would be too much happiness."—"In proof that I am serious, and have been to confession, I tell you I am just going to commence my penance and will ask you to assist me."—"But," answered his wife, "supposing it were true, you know you must perform your penance yourself, and not give a share of it to others."—"Of course, I know that, but there is enough for us three, and even for the servants. Have a fire made in the middle of the yard." Whilst this was being done, he goes up to his library with his wife and daughter; they take down all the bad books and have the servants carry them to the fire. The bonfire that was made of them, my dear friends, must have caused joy in heaven as well as on earth.—MULLOIS, *Mois de Marie de tout le Monde*, 60.

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CHAPTER XI.

EXTREME UNCTION.

617. *Death of Queen Matilda.*—One of the holiest queens that Germany has had is the venerable Matilda, who is even honored with the title of blessed, on the 14th of March, the day of her death. Being arrived in the city of Quedlimburg, which she had chosen for the place of her sepulchre, near King Henry the Fowler, her husband, she fell sick, and seeing that her death was near, she said to William, Archbishop of Mayence, her grandson, who came to visit her: "I doubt not but it was God that sent you hither, since no one is more proper than you to assist me in the hour of death. Now, my son, you will commence by hearing my confession and giving me absolution; then you will go to the church to say Mass for my sins, for the soul of King Henry, my lord, and for all the faithful departed." After the Archbishop had said Mass, he went back to her again, gave her a second absolution, then the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and, finally, the Holy Viaticum. He remained yet three days with her, and, seeing that she was not so near her end, he asked her permission to depart. As she had given all to the poor, she had no other present to give him but a pall, one of those

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she had reserved for her own burial. She gave it to him, then, saying: "Take it, my son! you will need it more than I, for you have a hard journey before you." In fact, Archbishop William died suddenly on his way home to his diocese. Queen Matilda survived him twelve days; but, on the Saturday in the first week of Lent, at the dawn of day, she sent for the priests of her household, and the nuns of the monastery of Quedlimburg, which she had founded and to which she had retired. When her condition became known, a great multitude of women flocked to see her; she ordered every one to be admitted, and gave them much salutary advice. Then she desired the priests and nuns to draw near, to hear her last public confession, and beg of God to forgive her her sins. After this she ordered that Mass should be said and the Body of Our Lord brought her for the last time. Lastly, she caused herself to be laid on the floor on sackcloth, put ashes on her head with her own hands, and died in the odor of sanctity, on the 14th of March, 968, on which day the Church honors her memory.—GODESCARD, *Vies des Saints*, *14th March*.

618. *A Dead Person Brought to Life to Receive Extreme Unction.*—The Church earnestly recommends that people should not neglect having the last sacraments administered to the sick; it is better to take it a little too soon than expose persons to die without that indispensable aid. It is an unpardonable fault in parents who have the cruelty to act otherwise. St. Malachy, Archbishop of Armagh, in Ire-

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land, having entered the house of a lady of quality, who was dangerously ill, in order to administer to her the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, the people who were there were of opinion that he had better postpone the ceremony till next morning. The holy bishop acceded to their wishes and retired; but this poor woman died a little while after. St. Malachy was the more grieved at this that he took all the blame to himself for having allowed her to die without receiving the last sacraments. He passed the whole night praying and weeping, so that the abundance of tears he shed on that occasion supplied, in some degree, to the dead the want of Holy Unction. Whilst he persevered in prayer with his disciples, the Lord rewarded his faith in a very extraordinary manner; the dead returned to life, like a person awaking from a deep sleep. She raised herself on her bed, recognized St. Malachy, who was praying, and saluted him respectfully. Immediately the sadness was changed into joy, and all who saw this miracle were amazed. But the holy bishop thanked and blessed the Lord; he anointed the resuscitated woman, well knowing, says St. Bernard, who relates this story, *that sins are forgiven in that sacrament, and that the prayer of faith saves the sick.* When the holy archbishop had repaired what he called his fault, he withdrew. The patient continued to grow better, and even recovered her health. She lived so for several days, as if to give time for every one to be convinced of the miracle. At length, when she had

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performed the penance which St. Malachy had imposed upon her in her last confession, she died a second time in the grace of the Lord.—*Vie de Saint Malachie*, Chapter XXIV.

619. *A Dauphin at the Bedside of His Servant.*—The best way of proving one's affection for a dying person is not to keep away the priest who can alone do any good; on the contrary, everything must be done to procure for them a good and holy death. The virtuous Dauphin, father of Louis XII., one day learned that an old servant of his house was in danger of death, and that he would not hear of regulating the affairs of his conscience. He was painfully affected. "Alas!" said he, "and the soul of that unhappy man is as precious before God as ours! My confessor must be sent to him." But thinking that he might still do some good himself, in behalf of a man who had spent his life in his service, he went himself to his house. "Well! my friend," said he, "I am coming to see you, to tell you how sorry I am on your account. I have not forgotten that you always served me with affection; think, on your side, that you would give me, for the first time in your life, the greatest of all sorrows, if you did not employ the little while you have yet to live in preparing for death." The poor man, softened even to tears by this step of his good master's, awakes from his fatal lethargy, and reproaches himself for not having profited by the great examples of virtue he had had under his eyes. The lively faith of a great prince

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reanimates his! he gives shining proofs of repentance, and disposes himself for the grace of the sacraments, which he receives with much edification. Some hours before his death he sent word to the Dauphin that he was dying content, but that he hoped to have a small share in the prayers of his virtuous master. The prince, happy to hear this, sent his valet to tell him on his part: "I thank you, my friend, for the pleasure you have given me; you may reckon on my feeble prayers, and on others that will be still more efficacious." How beautiful this is, my friends! and how fortunate one is, at that last moment, to have true friends, who occupy themselves with our eternal interests, when we can no longer do so ourselves!—Revre, *Anec. Chret.*, 293.

620. *A Young Girl who Converted Her Mother Before She Died.*—"During the winter of 1824," relates a worthy and pious clergyman, "I was called to a young person attacked by the king's evil. She resided with her mother, a woman about fifty years old, who had been a widow several years. Having learned that the latter did not frequent the sacraments, I spoke to her several times on that subject, and always without effect; soon she avoided meeting me, and took care to retire to her own room as soon as I entered the house. Meanwhile the daughter saw her end approaching, and appeared nowise alarmed. It seemed that the death, of which she so often spoke, had for her no bitterness. One day, after hearing her confession, I was going away, when she asked me

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to send for her mother and not go away myself. The woman, being come, was surprised to see her daughter in tears; it was something unusual with her, as she was generally very cheerful, notwithstanding her sufferings. 'Why these tears, my dear daughter?' said she; 'are you losing courage now after bearing all so patiently heretofore?'—'No, mother, no! it is because I must bid you farewell to-day that I am weeping. Ah! what a sad farewell!'—'But why are you not more resigned?'—'Alas!' said she, 'why? because that farewell will be eternal.'—'What is that you say, daughter? you do not mean it.'—'Indeed I do, mother; the leave I take of you on this day is forever. You and I do not go the same road. By approaching the sacraments I walk in the way marked out by our holy religion, and I hope for the happiness she promises. As for you, poor mother, since you are going another way, you cannot pretend to reach the same destination.' She uttered these words in a strong, firm voice, which showed her agitation. I, the witness of this scene which I could not expect, and could not possibly have anticipated, I could not restrain my surprise. The mother turned pale, and appeared much affected. Then the dying girl mustered all her strength, and raising herself painfully on her elbow: 'Adieu!' she cried; 'mother! dear mother! I shall never see you more!—Adieu, mother, adieu! we shall be separated forever!—yes, forever!' At these words the mother fainted away. In a little while she recovered some-

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what, rose up and approached the bed. 'No, my daughter,' said she all in tears; 'no, we shall not be separated! Console yourself, my child! I have been your mother; to-day you are mine; I will go to confession, and will henceforth be a Catholic in act as well as in profession. Sir,' said she, turning to me, 'will you hear my confession to-day? I must give my child that comfort before she breathes her last; she must, at least, see that I have commenced.' I appointed an hour for her to be in the church; she was faithful to her promise. This happy change rejoiced the young girl, who died some days after, thinking only of heaven, where she had now the sweet hope of meeting her mother again."—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 414.

621. *The Combat of a Young Dying Christian.*—Do you know why it is, dear friends, that the Church is so eager to administer the last sacraments to the dying? It is because the devil then redoubles his assaults, to try and precipitate souls into the abyss of eternal woe. Here is the example of a child about your own age. Edmond de Laage, a pupil of the sixth class in the Little Seminary of Saint Acheul, having been attacked by the disease called *tetanus*, was soon apprised of the dangerous state in which he was. They endeavored to excite him to resignation. "Oh, yes!" he repeated often, "yes, I am very resigned—I believe—I love the good God; I am resigned to His holy will." To strengthen him against the horrors which usually accompany the approach

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of death, they ask him if he does not desire to receive Extreme Unction. "Oh, yes!" he cried with transport, "I shall be very glad to receive it." And he did receive it with the most edifying piety, responding himself to all the prayers of the Church. The assistance of that sacrament was much needed by him; it seemed, in fact, that the devil was making a violent attack upon him. Several times he was seen to make motions of the head and arms, as if repulsing some one, and at the same time he exclaimed: "You weary me!—begone!—no, I do not want you!—all Thine, my God! all Thine, soul and body!" In another such crisis he began himself to say aloud the Lord's Prayer, which all present continued with him. Some time after, as he appeared more agitated, some one near him said: "Fear nothing, my child! there are five priests of us around you."—"Oh! I am not afraid, Father!" And immediately he added, in a tone of voice that drew tears from those who heard him: "Jesus, my God, my God! have mercy on me! cast a look on me in this miserable life!—O my God! I commit my soul to Thy hands!" This holy youth died so in the Lord, the 27th May, 1825; he was but 14 years of age.—*Souvenirs des Petits Seminaires*, 258.

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CHAPTER XII.

HOLY ORDERS.

622. *Revolt of Core, Dathan and Abiron*—The dignity of priest, that is to say, minister of the Lord, is a dignity which God alone can confer; He alone can call thereto whoever He pleases, and woe to those who intrude themselves into it without vocation! We find, my dear friends, a frightful example of this in the Holy Scripture. God had Himself chosen the family of Aaron to be invested with the priesthood. It was at the beginning of the journey of the Hebrews through the desert, after the miraculous passage of the Red Sea. Three Israelites, jealous of not having been chosen to offer sacrifice to the Lord, revolted against Moses, and murmured even against God himself. The very day when, in presence of all the people, Aaron was to commence exercising the priesthood wherewith he was clothed, these miserable wretches presented themselves with their censors before the tabernacle of the Lord. But the punishment of their sacrilegious audacity was not long delayed; for just as they were assembled, the earth opened under their feet and swallowed them up in its bowels, with a hundred and fifty other conspirators. All the Israelites, terrified at this visible

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punishment, took flight, exclaiming—"Let us beware that the earth does not swallow us with them!' One proof that this chastisement was really directed against the usurpers of the sacerdotal dignity is, that all the children of Dathan and Abiron perished with their fathers, because they had shared their crime, whereas the sons of Core were spared, because they would not consent to the wicked design of that unhappy man.—*Numbers*, Chap. XVI.

623. *A Coal-Heaver Made a Bishop.*—Amongst the examples of persons of humble origin who merited being raised to the priestly dignity, I know none as striking as that of St. Alexander, the coal-heaver. Here is how it happened. The Church of Comanus, in the province of Pontus, in Asia, being deprived of a bishop, sent deputies to St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Bishop of Neo-Cesarea, praying him to give them a pastor. That holy bishop, being come for that purpose to Comanus, each one hastened to propose to him for bishop the noblest and most distinguished for their shining qualities. But St. Gregory, who considered only virtue, told the magistrates and chief men of the city, several of whom presented themselves, that they would, perhaps, do better to seek their bishop amongst those of more humble condition. One of those who presided at the election would make this pass for a jest; he said to St. Gregory: "If that be so, and if you would have us pass over the best men we have, and take a bishop from amongst the common people, I advise you to choose Alexander

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the coal-heaver; we will all consent to that appointment."—"And who is this Alexander?" said St. Gregory. Some one had him brought into the midst of the assembly, and presented him laughing. He was clothed in dirty tattered garments, and his trade was easily seen from the blackness of his face and hands. Every one began to laugh, seeing so strange a figure in the midst of the assembly. Alexander, without appearing either ashamed or astonished, looked quiet and composed, which showed that he was content with his state; and that made St. Gregory judge that there was something remarkable in him. He took him aside, and asked him who he was. Alexander acknowledged that it was not necessity which had induced him to adopt that trade, but the desire of hiding himself, practising virtue: "I regard," said he, "this coal dust which disfigures me as a mask that prevents me from being known. I am young, as you see, and if I would take the trouble, might appear very well." Gregory having examined him carefully, handed him over to his attendants, with the necessary instructions as to what they should do, then returned to the assembly. He there spoke of the duties of a bishop, and engaged their attention till Alexander was brought in. He had been washed and clothed in St. Gregory's garments, so that he appeared a different man, and attracted every one's attention. "Be not surprised," then said St. Gregory, "if you were mistaken in judging by appearance; the devil even was very glad to render this vessel of election useless by

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keeping him concealed." He afterwards consecrated Alexander bishop, with the usual ceremonies, and requested him to speak before the assembly, which he did in a solid and sensible manner that fully justified the wisdom of the choice made of him. He perfectly corresponded with the high opinion formed of his merit, and worthily governed the Church of Comanus during a part of the third century.—FLEURY, *Eccles. Hist.*, II.

624. *A True Bishop.*—Would you like, children, that I should show you a true pastor of the Church? Listen: The Eastern Emperor, named Valens, had the misfortune of being an Arian, that is to say, a heretic of the sect of Arius. He knew all the merit of St. Basil, Archbishop of Cesarea, and would gladly have had him join his party. He would at least try, and charged Modestus, Prefect of the Pretorium, with that negotiation. The latter, who was proud and haughty, quickly summoned the good bishop before his tribunal, and arrogantly addressed him: "Basil, how is it that you resist the power of the Emperor?"—"I see not that I thereby do wrong," answered the prelate with a noble yet modest air. "Why are you not of the same religion as the Emperor?"—"Because a greater Master than the Emperor forbids it?"—"How!" cried Modestus, rising from his seat in a fury, "do you not fear the effects of my indignation and my power?"—"What are those effects?"—"Well! I am going to enumerate them for you, hardened and obdurate man! There

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is question of nothing less than confiscating your goods, sending you into exile, subjecting you to the torture, and putting you to death."—"Oh! if that be all, you may save yourself the trouble; there is nothing there that frightens me. He who has nothing is not afraid of confiscation. You may send me into exile, but the whole earth is my country. If you try to make me suffer, that will not last long, since my life is almost spent. Finally, death would be to me a great boon, for it would put an end to all my miseries." The Prefect Modestus was quite disconcerted by this firm and Christian language. "Never," said he, "did I hear any one speak so!"—"Ah!" said Basil, "that is because you never met a bishop; any minister of Christ would have answered such threats in the same way. As often as conscience is in question, we make it a duty to be tractable and submissive; but when the cause of God is concerned, we are no longer the same." Modestus thought it no use to go farther with the trial, and went to tell the Emperor that nothing could be done with Basil, and they might as well let him alone.—D. GENEVAUX, *Hist. Chois.*, 348.

625. *To Die Rather than be a Priest.*—Saints, my friends, have been seen to ask the grace of dying that they might not be ordained priests. Of this number was Nilammon. He had so high an idea of the priesthood, that notwithstanding all the solicitations made him to receive Holy Orders, he constantly refused that honor. Nevertheless Theophilus, patri-

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arch of Alexandria, being come to Hieraplus, his place of abode, declared positively that he purposed not only to ordain him priest, but even to consecrate him bishop of that city; consequently, he commanded him, on the part of God, to obey. Nilammon was extremely surprised and afflicted by what the patriarch said; he had not strength to disobey him; neither could he take flight, because he was carefully watched. He asked time to prepare himself for an action so important. Theophilus granted him but one day, and that day was wholly consecrated to prayer. How urgently did that holy man beseech the Lord to avert from him the misfortune wherewith he was so speedily threatened, that of being burdened with a load under the weight of which he thought his salvation would be exposed! The hour of ordination being come, Nilammon was sent for by the patriarch; he besought him to postpone the ceremony yet a few moments, because he had still some prayers to say. Both of them fell on their knees; as soon as the patriarch rose up he made a sign for Nilammon to approach. They went to call the holy man, but he made no answer. It was soon perceived that he could not answer; he was found with his hands joined and his eyes raised to heaven. But God had heard his prayer; Nilammon had said to him: "Lord, let me die rather than be a priest!" And God had let him die!—LASSAUSSE, *Explic. du Cat. de l'Empire*, 659.

626. *A Schoolboy who is to be a Priest.*—The vocation to the ecclesiastical state, very dear friends,

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almost always manifests itself from our earliest years St. Anscairus, Archbishop of Hamburg, was once looking through a window of his abbey at the children going from school to church; he remarked that they were generally very giddy and dissipated. There was only one exception; his modesty and recollection attracted the Saint's attention. Whilst the others could scarce behave properly even in the church, this pious child prayed like a little angel. This conduct, so edifying, gave great pleasure to the holy Archbishop, who had followed the boys into the church. After Mass he sent for the parents of this virtuous child, and told them that he was willing to have him educated at his own expense, and prepared for the ecclesiastical state, provided they were satisfied. It is easily imagined that the boy's parents willingly consented. The young scholar received a liberal education, and, like the child Jesus, he grew at once, in age, in wisdom, and in grace before God and man. St. Anscairus subsequently took him for his constant companion in his apostolic journeys; and Nembert, for so he was called, distinguished himself by his piety and zeal for the propagation of religion in Sweden and the north of Germany. After the death of his benefactor, he was unanimously chosen to the archiepiscopal see of Hamburg, where, after having zealously and faithfully discharged the duties of his sacred office for twenty-three years, he died in the odor of sanctity.—SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 101.

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627. *Respect Due to the Ministers of the Lord*—The dignity wherewith priests and other ministers of the Lord are vested requires on our part, dear friends, the most profound respect. Woe to him who should forget what he owes them! It is related that, about the year 1690, in a parish of the diocese of Besançon, not far from that city, a surprising event took place, which was regarded as a blow from Heaven. Two young libertines were scandalizing the parish by their disorders; the pastor, as soon as he perceived it, took care to apprise their fathers, who took the warning very ill. One of them had even the impudence to reply: "Father, I would advise you to mind your breviary, and not meddle with my family affairs; youth must have its fling."—"If I inform you of the bad conduct of some of your family, my friend," answered the priest mildly, "it is because my duty obliges me. I am responsible for your son's soul, as well as yours, and, consequently, I must watch over his conduct and let you know of it; I speak to you as a pastor, and you do not answer as a Christian; take care that God does not punish you and your children, whose bad conduct you encourage!" This man, far from profiting by the wise counsels of his pastor, told everywhere that he had given the priest his answer so well that he would never attempt to talk to him again. It was on Saturday. As the thing became public, the pastor thought it might be advisable to say something about it next day in the pulpit. He did so with much moderation, and said

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in his instruction that he had a regard for all his parishioners; that when he was obliged to give them an advice in public or in private, he begged them to believe that it was not to give them trouble, but through charity and for their salvation; that when the advice of a pastor was despised, God could not but be offended, and that He always punished such contempt. After Mass the man who had received his pastor's warning so ill the day before began his invectives again, saying that priests had little else to do than abusing people, but that he cared little what they said. The two young men spent the rest of the day in the tavern, with the consent of their fathers, and, to spite the pastor, they behaved more scandalously than ever. But God put an end to their scandalous life by a most exemplary punishment. Next day a storm came on. These two libertines, with two others who were well behaved, ran to the church tower to ring the bell; there came, at the moment, such a peal of thunder that the four ringers, seized with terror, went down with all speed to make their escape. As they were going down, the thunder killed the two libertines, but in a manner that plainly showed it was a judgment of God; and this is how it was: The thunder, in falling, after making the circuit of the tower several times, followed the four young men down the staircase; it spared the first, who was good, and struck the second, who was one of the libertines; it did not harm the third, but struck the fourth, who was the other

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profligate, and killed him. Afterwards the thunder entered the church, where was the mother of one of those wicked young men, carried that woman away, and dashed her against the wall, leaving all the other persons in the church uninjured. At sight of an accident so extraordinary the justice of God was recognized, and the fathers of those libertines came, bathed in tears, to ask pardon of the pious pastor for the contempt wherewith they had treated his salutary warning.—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 433.

628. *Fenelon's Walk.*—Nothing is more touching, my dear friends, than the kindness with which the true pastors of the Church occupy themselves with those who are confided to them. Let me tell you, on that subject, the story of Fenelon's cow. That good Archbishop of Cambray was one day walking in the fields, when he met a poor villager who was almost in despair. He goes up to him, speaks to him kindly, and wishes to know the cause of his affliction. "Ah! my good lord," cried the peasant, "I am lost, I am the most unhappy of men! I had a cow that was my only resource and that of my family, and I cannot find her anywhere. I brought her to that pasture, down below, and she has disappeared. What has become of her I don't know. Ah! my God, what am I to do?"—"Have patience, my child," said the Archbishop, "I will help you to look for her; I hope God will bless our search. Let us first examine how she got out; then we may find some traces of her; but,

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once more, let us trust in Providence and our efforts may be crowned with success." Immediately he sets out with the peasant, travels about with him all day, and at length succeeded in finding the cow that was supposed to be lost. She was brought back in triumph to the cow-house, and you may well believe what joy her return occasioned. There is, I think, a touching proof of Fenelon's goodness, and also of how far the true pastors of the Church will go in regard to their spiritual children. If you would like to read this pretty story in verse, you may find it in several collections of poetry, where it bears the title of *Fenelon's Walk.*—REYRE, *Anec. Chret.*, 283.

629. *The Beautiful Tresses of a Little Girl in Versailles.*—There is nothing so beautiful as you, dear children, when you have the happiness of being good and wise. You sometimes do such acts of virtue and generosity that aged persons are astonished. Listen: At one of the most disastrous periods of the French Revolution, all the priests of the department of Seine-et-Oise were arrested, thrown into carts and taken to Versailles. Innocence and purity are condemned to dwell in prisons, the abode of infamy and crime; these unfortunates, penniless as they are, see nought but death before them. But He whose holy doctrine they have preached, and whose providence feeds the birds of the air, He who went down with Daniel to the den, to calm the fury of the lions, He will go with the confessors of the faith into their prisons, and inspire all good souls in the city of Versailles with the

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charity that creates resources. And do you know who were the most touching ministers of that Providence, which is the caretaker of the just on earth? They were pious children. They distinguished themselves by their assiduous cares and tender solicitude; they cried out for those who instructed them, those who had, for some time, been preparing them for their First Communion. They were seen to share their bread with their spiritual fathers, and distribute amongst them whatever money they had at their disposal. A little girl of ten or twelve years old, having nothing to offer, was inspired by the genius of charity to invent a new resource, which was to give her the means of equalling any of her companions in the amount of her alms. She has very fine hair, she goes to a hairdresser, and so earnestly entreats him that he consents at length to shave off her fair tresses, and to buy them for five francs. Proud of her noble sacrifice, the girl brings her money to the poor priests who are languishing in the prisons of Versailles. Did you ever see, my young friends, a more generous instance of charity towards the priests of the Lord?—GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 421.

630. *I will be a Brother of the Christian Schools.*—To be called to the ecclesiastical state, my friends, is a grace which God alone can give; but it is the same with the religious vocation. Let me quote for you an example which concerns us directly. A mother had two sons. The elder, aged twenty years, had left the Military School of Saint Cyr, and dis-

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tinguished himself at Staorieli. After the conquest of Algiers, in 1830, he returned home. But alas! on entering the house, he found every one in tears; his younger brother, who was ten years younger than he, was in the last extremity. The poor mother hardly saw the son who had just arrived and was in good health; her every look, her every care, was for the child she was about to lose. The young officer hastened to do what he could for his brother. The boy's sufferings were prolonged; the breath was barely in him, and his mother's soul seemed to hang on that breath. "If he dies, I will die, too!" she incessantly repeated: "that child was my life!" These words were hard for the young officer, but God knows he did not blame his mother. He said to himself: "If it were I that was dying, she would love me just the same." All the art of the physicians could not restore the little patient his fine dark eyes were already fixed and glassy; already he saw neither his mother nor brother who held his little cold, thin hands. "*He is going to die! he is going to die!*" repeated the unhappy woman. The priest already spoke of resignation, and said that children were blessed, that the good God made angels of them. The mother heard only the laboring breath of her son. The young officer's heart was broken by the sufferings of his brother and his mother's despair. The child made a convulsive motion, and every one shuddered. The priest said *Let us pray!* and they all fell on their knees. My friends, here

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is the prayer the officer said within himself, and which God graciously heard: "My God, if Thou restorest my brother to health, I make a vow to consecrate myself to the education of children of his age in the institute of the Christian Brothers; yes, I will teach them to love and bless Thee! My God, I will bless Thee all the days of my life, if Thou wilt cure my brother, and console my mother." This prayer of filial and fraternal love reached Him who strikes, who heals, and who resuscitates: the child was saved! Some weeks after, the officer bid adieu to his mother, telling her of the vow he had made on that occasion. "There is my sword," said he; "you will give it to Henry, when he grows up; he may, perhaps, use it; as for me, I am going to keep the promise I made to redeem his life; I will teach children of his age to love God, their mother, virtue and innocence." The mother throws her arms around her son's neck, she embraces and blesses him. Oh! it was he that she then loved the best. She did all she could to keep him with her, but he departed to accomplish his vow .... Now, my friends, he is one of our Brothers. Sometimes, when he passes through the streets, young people look at him, and, taking the cigar from their mouth, laugh foolishly in his face. But the ex-artillery officer of the Army of Africa goes his way in peace, saying to himself: "My God, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"—Noel, *Cat. de Rodez*, V., 199.

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CHAPTER XIII.

MATRIMONY.

631. *The Most Ancient of Mausoleums.*—It would be difficult, I think, even impossible, my friends, to find in all ancient history a firmer instance of conjugal affection than that which I am going to relate. Mausoleus, King of Caria, in Asia Minor, dying after a reign of twenty-four years, left the throne to Queen Artemisa, his wife. That princess employed all her power and riches only in signalizing the affection she had had for her husband. Wishing to immortalize her grief, she raised, in honor of her dear Mausoleus, a monument so magnificent, so splendid, so richly decorated, that it passed for one of the seven wonders of the world; hence it was that the name of *mausoleums* was subsequently given to all remarkable monuments erected to the memory of the dead. That nothing might be wanting to the glory of her husband, that princess, the true model of wives and widows, founded a prize in favor of the orator who should best succeed in pronouncing the eulogy of the deceased monarch. It was Theopompo, of the Island of Chio, in Greece, who first obtained it. If Aulu-Gella and several other writers of antiquity are to be believed, Artemisa did not even content herself with these public proofs of her conjugal affection. She went so far as to gather carefully the ashes of Mau-

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soleus and have his bones pulverized; and, every day, she put a little of that powder into her drink, desirous of making her own body, so to say, the living tomb of her husband. She survived him but two years, and her love ended only with her life. She died in 351 before Christ.—FILASSIER, *Dict. Hist. d'Educ.*, I., 233.

632. *Story of Eponina and Sabinus.*—It is not only amongst the Greeks and Romans that we shall find beautiful instances of conjugal love and fidelity. Here is one which has been justly celebrated by the poets and artists of all ages; it took place amongst the ancient Gauls. Sabinus, chief of the Lingons,—that is to say, the people of whom Langres, in Haute-Marne, was the capital,—Sabinus, I say, having attempted to shake off the yoke of the Romans, was defeated by the troops of the Emperor Vespasian, and obliged to seek an asylum from the wrath of the victorious prince. He could easily fly into Germany, but his affection for his virtuous spouse, named Eponina, hindered him from taking that step. He had a vast and deep cavern, only known to himself, which served him to secrete his grain and his treasures. Resolved to conceal himself there, he dismissed all his people, as though purposing to take his own life. He kept but two freedmen, of tried fidelity, and, with their aid, he set fire to his country house, to make believe that his body was consumed by the flames, and retired into one of his caverns. He then dispatched Martial, one of his domestics, to his wife, to

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announce to her that he was no more. He knew well what a blow it would be for that tender spouse; but his purpose was precisely to persuade the public of the truth of the report of his death by the sincerity of Eponina's grief. It was just what happened. Eponina, in despair, threw herself on the ground, gave herself up to cries, and tears, and groans, and in that state passed three days and three nights without eating and without receiving any consolation. Sabinus, apprised of her situation, feared the consequences. He had her secretly apprised that he was not dead, that he was concealed in a safe place, but requested her to continue her demonstrations of grief to keep up an error that was so salutary to him. Eponina played her part to perfection. She visited her husband by night; then reappeared in the world without giving the least suspicion of so strange a mystery. By degrees she grew bolder; her absence became longer; at last she buried herself alive in the cavern with Sabinus. She had two children during the time these relations lasted, so agreeable for two spouses who loved each other so faithfully. She nursed them herself, and brought them up carefully in her obscure retreat, always by means of the two faithful servants whom Sabinus had kept. After remaining nine years in this gloomy dwelling, Sabinus was unhappily discovered. He was taken with his wife and children, and brought to Rome loaded with chains. When they were presented to the Emperor Vespasian, Eponina spoke to him courageously; and, showing her

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children: "Cæsar," said she, "I have brought into the world these sad fruits of our disgrace, and I suckled them in the horror of darkness that we might be able to raise to thee a greater number of suppliant hands." Horrible to relate, Vespasian is said to have shed tears of pity, and yet yielded to the desire of a base revenge: he condemned Sabinus to death. Seeing this, Eponina resumed her wonted dignity of mien, and demanded to be executed with her husband. The Emperor gave her that barbarous satisfaction.—FILASSIER, *Dict. Hist. d'Educ.*, I., 127.

633. *The Holy Industry of a Christian Woman.*—St. Monica, mother of the great St. Augustine, may serve as a model for persons whom God calls to manage a household. Patricius, her husband, was a pagan, and gave himself up to all the impetuosity of his passions. Monica's great care was to gain him for God. For that she labored by her submission, her mildness, her patience. She was most careful never to make him any hasty or unseasonable reproaches. She never complained of him; on the contrary, she hid his faults from all her acquaintances. By this truly Christian conduct she succeeded in gaining her husband's heart; he esteemed, he admired, and respected her. She often addressed fervent prayers to the Lord for his conversion; they were at length heard. Patricius allowed himself to be instructed in the Christian religion and was converted. He received baptism, and thenceforward became chaste, modest, meek, worthy, in short, of

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having St. Monica for a wife. The latter was truly an angel of peace. When women complained before her of the bad conduct and ill-treatment of their husbands, she smiling said to them: "Take care of your tongue; doth it become servants to rebel against their masters?" As tender a mother as she was a meek and gentle wife, what care did she not take to bring up her children Christianly! Notwithstanding her wise counsels, Augustine, her son, had the misfortune to go astray for a time; but Monica gave herself neither rest nor peace till she had brought him back to the right way. It was the tears she shed, and the prayers she offered up for him, that at length obtained his conversion. And that conversion was so perfect that he became a very great Saint. Monica herself had the art of sanctifying herself amid the cares and troubles of the household, and the Church decreed to her the honors of canonization.—Godescard, *Vies des Saints.*

634. *A Woman Carrying Her Husband on Her Back.*—When you read the history of the Middle Ages, my friends, you will there find the beautiful trait of conjugal love which happened in the little town of Weinsberg, in Germany. The Duke of Wurtemburg had strongly opposed the election of Conrad III., who was proclaimed Emperor in 1138. That did not prevent the election from being confirmed. When the new monarch had assumed the diadem, the Duke of Wurtemburg refused to recognize him, and shut himself up in the fortress of

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Weinsberg, the strongest in his whole duchy of Wurtemburg. He was besieged there by the imperial army, but withstood for twelve days the attack of his sovereign with a bravery truly heroic. At length he was obliged to yield to superior strength. The Emperor, much exasperated, would have destroyed all before him; he even intended to slaughter every living being. Nevertheless, on the remonstrances of his council, he pardoned the women, and permitted them to carry off what they most valued, but insisted on their leaving the town immediately. The Duchess availed herself of this permission to save her husband's life. She took him on her back, and so quitted the town. All the other women did as much, and Conrad saw them go forth loaded with this precious burden, the Duchess at their head. He could not withstand a sight so touching; yielding to the admiration it caused him, he forgave the husbands for the sake of their wives; the whole town was saved.—FILASSIER, *Dict. Hist. d'Educ.*, I., 229.

635. *A Female Soldier.*—It has sometimes happened, my friends, and you may, perhaps, have read examples of it, that women have succeeded in enrolling themselves as soldiers, although such fraud is against the law of every country. I have read in the *Historical Dictionary of Education*, that Catherine Hermann, the wife of a Dutch sailor, employed that most extraordinary means to save her husband from the galleys for life. The fact occurred as follows: This brave mariner, having been taken by the Span-

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iards, who were besieging Ostend, in the 17th century, was sent to the galleys with several of his countrymen. Catherine, hearing this sad news, forms then the strangest of all projects. Without saying anything to any one, she cuts off her hair, disguises herself as a workingman, repairs to the camp of Ostend, and enlists in the service of the Spaniards the enemies of her country. She soon made herself remarkable as much by her prudent and regular conduct as by her heroic bravery. On one occasion, having fought valiantly under the eyes of the Count de Bucquoi, the latter sent for her and told her without knowing who she was: "Brave soldier, ask whatsoever thou wilt, and I will grant it."—"General," said Catherine, with an engaging smile, "if I chanced to be a female soldier, would you retract?"—"No, on the contrary——" Immediately, Catherine throws herself on her knees, makes herself known as the wife of the sailor Hermann, confesses the stratagem she employed, and asks the Count de Bucquoi to set her husband free. The Count, touched with admiration, raises her immediately, restores her husband to her, and sends them both back to their village, praising Catherine for her fine action, and congratulating the sailor on having so virtuous a wife.—FILASSIER, *Dict. Hist., d'Educ.*, I., 131.

636. *The Wife of Marshal de Mouchy.*—Of all the victims who perished on the revolutionary scaffold in 1793, there are few who do not merit the admiration of all France. You may judge of this from the fol-

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lowing fact. Marshal de Mouchy was sentenced to die on the scaffold; he mounted it courageously, pronouncing these emphatic words: "At twenty I mounted the breach for my king, at eighty I mount the scaffold for my God." But listen: This venerable old man had been arrested, and conducted, like so many others, to the prison of the Luxembourg, in Paris. He was scarcely there when his wife went to join him. She is told that the accusation makes no mention of her; but she answers in a decided tone: "Since my husband is arrested, so am I." M. de Mouchy is brought before the revolutionary tribunal; she accompanies him. The public accuser warns her that he did not send for her. "Since my husband is summoned before your tribunal, so am I." At length, the famous Marshal is condemned to death, and the courageous wife ascends the fatal cart with him. "But you are not condemned," says the executioner to her. "Since my husband is condemned, so am I." No other answer could be drawn from this admirable woman, and it was found necessary to employ force to make her descend from the scaffold. Is not this what may be called the literal acceptation of those words of Our Lord: *A woman shall leave her father and her mother, and cleave unto her husband?* Oh! happy are the families which have at their head a man and woman so well adapted to each other!—FILASSIER, *Dict. Hist. d'Educ.*, I., 125.

THE END.

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